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ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the critical needs and problems facing juvenile justice efforts nationwide, highlighting eight significant challenges: (1) reducing overreliance on incarceration for non-dangerous youthful offenders; (2) developing a continuum of community-based sanctions and interventions for delinquent but non-dangerous youth; (3) employing research-proven program strategies to reduce delinquency; (4) identifying and intervening intensively with youth at extreme risk for chronic delinquency; (5) providing comprehensive support to youth with behavioral disturbances; (6) ensuring quality treatment and youth development services for incarcerated youth; (7) providing quality education and career development services to help youth outgrow delinquency and assume productive roles in society; and (8) reducing inappropriate detention for youth awaiting trial or pending placement. For each challenge, the report highlights one or more existing programs, policies, or initiatives that show how the challenge can be met successfully at the state and local levels. It notes that such programs not only produce far better outcomes than are commonplace in current juvenile justice systems nationwide, but they also yield vast savings for taxpayers. (Contains 64 endnotes.) (SM)

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Richard A. Mendel

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Our goal is to enable policymakers and their aides to be more effective in their professional duties and of greater service—to Congress, the Administration, state legislatures, governors and national organizations—in the development, enactment, and implementation of sound policies affecting our nation's young people. We believe that knowing more about youth issues—both intellectually and experientially—will help our participants formulate better policies and do their jobs more effectively. AYPF does not lobby or take positions on pending legislation. We work to develop better communication, greater understanding and enhanced trust among these professionals, and to create a climate that will result in constructive action. Each year AYPF conducts 35 to 45 learning events (forums, discussion groups and study tours) and develops policy reports disseminated nationally. For more information about these activities and other publications, contact our web site at *www.aypf.org*.

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American Youth Policy Forum

CONTENTS

2 **INTRODUCTION:**

2 Eight Challenges for Juvenile Justice Reform
3 Less Cost, More Safety and Success
4 Matrix

8 **CHALLENGE #1: Reduce Overreliance on Incarceration**

9 **Un-Prisonment: Missouri Department of Youth Services**
9 An Alternative to "Training School"
10 Un-Prison Atmosphere
11 Safety, Savings, and Success
12 **Ohio and California:** Using Financial Incentives to Reduce Counties' Dependence on State Training Schools
13 The Keys to Success
14 Conclusion

15 **CHALLENGE #2: Offer A Broad Array of Community-Based Sanctions and Interventions for Delinquent but Non-Dangerous Youth**

16 **Building a Community-Based Continuum**
Tarrant County (TX) Juvenile Services Department
16 The Tarrant County Continuum
18 **San Diego County** The Comprehensive Stratagy
19 Cross-Country Contrast
20 Less Cost, More Safety

21 **CHALLENGE #3: Replicate Research-Proven Program Strategies to Reduce Delinquency**

22 **Putting Research Into Practice**
Youth Villages in Memphis, Tennessee
22 Looking to the Research
24 Bringing Success to Scale
25 **Putting Proven Models Into Practice:** Washington State's Community Juvenile Accountability Act

28 **CHALLENGE #4: Identify and Intervene Intensively with Youth at Extreme Risk for Chronic Delinquency**

29 **Nipping Criminal Careers in the Bud**
The *8 Percent Solution*, Orange County, California
29 Identifying Potential "8 Percent Youth"
30 The "8 Percent" Program Model
31 **John, Rudy, and the Case for Early Intervention**
31 Measuring Success -- The "8 Percent" Dividend

33 **CHALLENGE #5: Provide Comprehensive Support and Assistance to Youth (and Children) with Behavioral Disturbances**

34 **Wraparound Milwaukee**
Systems Reform in a Large Jurisdiction
35 Understanding the "Wraparound" Approach
35 Wraparound -- *Milwaukee-Style*
36 Blended Funding and "Capitated Rate" Financing
37 Minimizing Out-of-Home Placement
37 Wraparound Success

39 **CHALLENGE #6: Offer Quality Treatment and Youth Development Services for Incarcerated Youth**

40 **The Last Chance Ranch**
Turning Around Florida's Toughest Juvenile Offenders
40 Up From the Sea: The Evolution of a Juvenile Justice Model
41 A Ranch for Florida's Toughest Juveniles
41 A Unique Atmosphere
42 Rewards, Punishments, and Hard Work
43 Phase Three -- Making Aftercare a Centerpiece
43 **The New Ferris School** Juvenile Corrections Reform in Delaware
44 Unparalleled Results

46 **CHALLENGE #7: Provide Quality Education and Career Development Services that Enable Youth to Assume Productive Roles in Society**

47 **Preparing Delinquent Youth for Productive Careers**
The Gulf Coast Training Center
47 Union Roots
48 **FRESH START at the Living Classrooms Foundation:**
An Old Trade Leads to New Success
48 Vocational Corrections
51 More Work, Less Recidivism

53 **CHALLENGE #8: Reduce Inappropriate Detention of Youth Awaiting Trial or Pending Placement**

54 **Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan**
Bringing Detention Reform to Seattle and King County, WA
55 Framing a Master Plan
55 Targets for Reform
56 **The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative**
58 The Fruits of Reform

60 **CONCLUSION**

61 **ENDNOTES**

66 **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

INTRODUCTION

"America has both the knowledge and the money we need to substantially reduce adolescent crime and youth violence. We have the know-how to reduce the number of young people likely to join the next generation of adult criminals. Better yet, we can likely achieve this goal at a cost no greater (and perhaps considerably less) than what we will spend if current juvenile justice policies and programs remain in place."

Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – and What Doesn't
(Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum, June 2000)

During the 1990s, juvenile crime pierced the national consciousness. Delinquency and youth violence soared to new heights early in the decade. Alarming stories about juvenile "superpredators" and a "ticking time bomb" of adolescent crime haunted the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*. Then the school shootings in Jonesboro and Paducah and at Columbine High shook the nation. Even a sharp decline in juvenile delinquency and violence since the early 1990s has not lessened Americans' continuing sense of alarm.

In June 2000, the American Youth Policy Forum and six national partner organizations published a report analyzing America's youth crime challenge at the turn of the millennium and assessing the effectiveness of new and existing juvenile crime policies nationwide. The report, entitled *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works – and What Doesn't*, found reason for great optimism. Juvenile justice experts and practitioners have developed an array of effective tools over the past two decades with proven power to reduce violence and other lawbreaking by adolescents.

The report also revealed causes for grave concern. Responding to public demand for action against youth crime, our nation's political leaders have responded aggressively to the perceived crisis. Virtually every state has enacted sweeping new laws since 1992 – erecting new correctional facilities, imposing procedures to shift more accused youth to adult criminal courts, and launching a bevy of new juvenile justice and youth crime prevention programs.

Unfortunately, many of the so-called "reforms" enacted in recent years have ignored the real causes for delinquency and neglected the promising cures. Many states have embraced tough-sounding strategies that appeal to voters but don't work, and most have failed to address longstanding weaknesses and imbalances in our nation's juvenile justice institutions.

Reducing the situation to a simple metaphor, scholars and practitioners have blazed a promising new trail toward progress in reigning in America's adolescent crime problem – a trail leading to less crime, lower costs, and fewer lost youth. Yet many of our nation's policymakers are instead marching full steam ahead in other directions – directions fraught with alarming costs and inevitable failure both for protecting the public and for maximizing success among troubled youth.

EIGHT CHALLENGES FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

This report follows up on *Less Hype, More Help* by focusing more squarely on the critical needs and problems facing juvenile justice efforts nationwide. Specifically, the report spotlights eight cross-cutting challenges – both to take advantage of new opportunities created by advances in research and practice, and to overcome commonplace problems that now cripple America's efforts to reduce delinquent offending and steer troubled youth away from crime. These challenges include:

1. Reducing Overreliance on Incarceration for Non-Dangerous Youthful Offenders

2. Developing a Continuum of Community-Based Sanctions and Interventions for Delinquent but Non-Dangerous Youth

3. Employing Research-Proven Program Strategies to Reduce Delinquency

4. Identifying and Intervening Intensively With Youth at Extreme Risk for Chronic Delinquency

5. Providing Comprehensive Support to Youth With Behavioral Disturbances

6. Ensuring Quality Treatment and Youth Development Services for Incarcerated Youth

7. Providing Quality Education and Career Development Services to Help Youth Outgrow Delinquency and Assume Productive Roles in Society

8. Reducing Inappropriate Detention for Youth Awaiting Trial or Pending Placement

For each of these challenges, this report highlights one or more existing programs, policies or initiatives that show how the challenge can be (and is being) met successfully at the state and local levels. (See table on pages 4-7.) ***By putting research into practice, employing best practice reforms, creating better incentives, improving multi-agency cooperation, and eliminating inefficiency, each of the guiding light programs is demonstrating that success is possible in juvenile justice. Recidivism can be lowered. Teen crime rates can be reduced. More positive outcomes for high-risk youth can be achieved.***

LESS COST, MORE SAFETY AND SUCCESS

As the following pages will detail, guiding lights programs not only produce far better outcomes than are now commonplace in juvenile justice systems nationwide. They also yield vast savings for taxpayers.

Most of the model initiatives profiled in this report achieve their notable successes for a price significantly lower than what more conventional programs currently spend on failure. Even those with high price-tags are proving cost-effective because they frequently solve problems the first time, rather than failing repeatedly and ensuring that youths return to the justice system and require repeated confinement.

Spend less, achieve more safety and more youth success: that is the opportunity available to America in juvenile justice reform – if we demonstrate the energy and resourcefulness and dedication to put our knowledge into practice.

Challenge	Exemplary Response	Critical Characteristics
No. 1 **Over-reliance on Incarceration**	**Missouri Division of Youth Services (State of Missouri)**	Statewide system based on: • small-scale residential facilities (rather than training schools) • extensive 24-hour/day therapy • quality education programs • heavy family outreach/counseling • well-qualified, highly-trained staff • extensive non-residential programming and aftercare support
No. 2 **Continuum of Community Sanctions and Interventions**	**Tarrant County Juvenile Services (Tarrant County, TX)**	County Probation Agency with: • limited number of locked pre-trial detention beds • extensive array of non-residential sanctions, including advocate programs, family preservation, and community service-restitution • strong partnerships with community-based service providers • limited use of confinement and residential treatment
No. 3 **Research-Based Program Models**	**Youth Villages (Memphis, TN)**	Private non-profit agency serving youth with emotional and behavioral disorders (including many delinquents), providing a continuum of residential and non-residential care, including • Multi-systemic Therapy, a highly effective home-based, family-focused mental health intervention • Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, another highly effective, research-based treatment model
No. 4 **Youth at Extreme Risk**	**"8 Percent Solution" (Orange County, CA)**	County probation program aimed at reducing the number of chronic juvenile offenders by: • identifying the characteristics of youth at highest risk to become chronic juvenile offenders • screening all first-time offenders to identify those with highest probability to become chronic offenders • enrolling potential chronic offenders in an intensive day treatment program including family therapy, substance abuse counseling, remedial academic education, and case management

Evidence of Effectiveness	Other Noteworthy Responses
1. Far lower recidivism rates than most other state juvenile corrections agencies. 2. Far smaller budget than juvenile corrections agencies in other states.	**Reclaim Ohio** – Statewide funding reform to reward counties for treating juvenile offenders locally and preventing excessive commitments to state training schools. **California Youth Authority** – New sliding scale funding formula requiring counties to pay a large share of the costs for non-serious offenders committed to state custody.
1. Substantial reductions in juvenile crime and violence. 2. 90-day failure rate for probation programs lower than most large urban counties in Texas. 3. County's long-term recidivism for youth served in local probation programs is second lowest among Texas' large urban counties.	**San Diego County** – Developed comprehensive strategy including programs to prevent the onset of delinquency and non-residential programming to reverse delinquent behavior before juvenile offenders commit serious crimes and require incarceration or transfer to adult courts.
1. Only agency in the nation to replicate these two state-of-the-art treatment models. 2. Using these models, substantially increased long-term success of troubled youth compared with traditional residential treatment programs used previously. 3. Achieving greater success at a far lower cost per participant than residential treatment.	**Washington State's Community Juvenile Accountability Act** – A grant program to local juvenile courts for replication of delinquency program strategies with proven power to reduce re-offending cost-effectively.
1. Just 49% of youth in initial pilot were re-arrested within 1 year, vs. 93% arrest rate for youth with identical characteristics in an earlier study. 2. In a controlled evaluation, youth who completed the program suffered two or more subsequent arrests 29% less often than youth randomly assigned to a control group. 3. "8%" youth also had fewer arrests, fewer court petitions, and spent fewer days in confinement than control group youth.	**Repeat Offender Prevention Project** – State-funded project to support the "8 Percent" program and other early intervention programs in 7 additional California jurisdictions, with a controlled evaluation design to measure the programs' impact scientifically.

Challenge	Exemplary Response	Critical Characteristics
No. 5 **Youth With Behavioral Disturbances**	**Wraparound Milwaukee (Milwaukee County, WI)**	County mental health program to reduce out-of-home treatment for disturbed (and often delinquent) youth using pooled funding ($28 million/year) from county juvenile probation, child welfare, and mental health agencies. • comprehensive home-based services • intensive case-management • strength-based treatment philosophy • extensive service-provider network • mobile treatment team for crisis management and prevention of admissions to psychiatric hospitals
No. 6 **Chronic and Violent Youth Offenders**	**Florida Environmental Institute (Glades County, FL)**	Small, privately-operated correctional facility for serious and violent youth offenders: • working ranch located in the Florida everglades, with no locked cells or restraints • high staff-to-offender ratio and close staff-offender relationships • intensive behavior management (reward/punishments for good/bad behavior) • extensive chores and work activities as well as in-depth educational programming • intensive aftercare support for six months
No. 7 **Quality Education and Career Development for Delinquent Youth**	**Gulf Coast Trades Center (New Waverly, TX)**	Residential corrections facility using vocational training as a primary strategy to rehabilitate juvenile offenders: • all students enrolled in one of 9 career tracks, each with a 915-hour applied curriculum • students receive two hours/day of academic instruction • most students participate in paid work experience on campus, in community agencies, or in new low-income housing construction • intensive aftercare, including job search/jobplacement assistance
No. 8 **Juvenile Detention Reform**	**Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan (King County, WA)**	Comprehensive analysis of county juvenile justice operations in order to: • reduce overcrowding at juvenile detention centers • eliminate need for construction and operation of added detention beds • identify alternative programs/policies to improve outcomes for juvenile offenders and reduce juvenile offending rates

Evidence of Effectiveness	Other Noteworthy Responses
1. Reduced use of residential treatment from 360 youth per day to 135 per day. 2. Reduced psychiatric hospitalizations of children/adolescents by 80 percent. 3. Reduced arrests of delinquent youth participants by more than 70 percent from year prior to year after treatment. 4. Substantially improved participants' behavioral functioning as measured by mental health assessments.	See **Youth Villages** (Challenge #3)
1. Recidivism rate has averaged 15.8 percent from 1997-2000, compared to recidivism rates of >40 percent for youth in other Florida residential corrections programs. 2. Despite longer stays and higher cost per day than most Florida training schools, the program ranks among the most cost-effective in the state for high-risk offenders due to far higher success rates.	**Ferris School** – The new Delaware training school built in the 1990s after years of litigation over substandard conditions and inadequate programming in an older facility. "New Ferris" offers high quality education and other programming – a dramatic improvement over past practice.
1. Recidivism rates are far below those of other moderate security facilities – and more than 30% below "expected recidivism" based on risk profile of participants. 2. Sixty percent of graduates find paid employment in their chosen occupational fields, with average starting wage of $7.50. 3. Sixty percent earn GEDs.	**Fresh Start** – Baltimore-based day program that teaches delinquent youth boat building and other vocational skills as part of comprehensive, 40-week (plus aftercare) rehabilitation strategy. Most graduates are employed, and fewer than one-fifth are re-arrested.
County adopted master plan in August 2000: • new policies/procedures/programs established to prevent unnecessary placements into detention and reduce lengths of stay; • average detention population down 30 percent since January 1999; • construction of new detention facility on hold indefinitely; • some funds not used for construction invested in state-of-the-art intervention programs for high risk offenders and their families.	**Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative** – Multi-million dollar project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that enabled three local jurisdictions to reduce overcrowding in juvenile detention, develop sound alternatives-to-detention programs, and streamline case processing to reduce unnecessarily long stays in detention for youthful offenders.

CHALLENGE #1:
REDUCE OVERRELIANCE ON INCARCERATION

"Evaluation research indicates that incarcerating young offenders in large, congregate care juvenile institutions does not effectively rehabilitate and may actually harm them... A century of experience with training schools and youth prisons demonstrates that they constitute the one extensively evaluated and clearly ineffective method to treat delinquents."[1]

Barry Feld, University of Minnesota Law School

Nationwide, juvenile justice agencies spent between $10 and $15 billion in 2000 to prosecute, supervise, punish and treat adolescents accused or convicted of delinquent or criminal behavior, or to prevent adolescent crimes before they occur. The majority of these funds were paid to confine a small segment of the juvenile offender population, and most confined youth were sent to "training schools" – large correctional institutions typically housing 100 to 500 juvenile offenders. Conditions of confinement in these facilities are often poor, and educational and mental health services are often inadequate. Moreover, the process of isolating youth exclusively with other delinquent peers tends to exacerbate rather than mitigate the law-breaking tendencies of youthful offenders.

Decisions to send youthful offenders to training schools (or correctional boot camps) are typically based upon two rationales: (1) the young person poses a danger to society and must be removed; or (2) a period of confinement will teach the young person a needed lesson. The evidence belies both of these rationales as justification for devoting the lion's share of juvenile justice resources to incarceration.

Most youth placed into training schools are* not *dangerous criminals. Nationwide, 27 percent of youthful offenders in out-of-home placements in October 1997 were guilty of violent felony crimes. (The large majority of these placements were to correctional units, with the rest being residential treatment centers or group homes.) A 1993 study of 28 states found that only 14 percent of offenders in correctional training schools were committed for violent felonies. More than half of the youthful offenders in state institutions were committed for property or drug crimes and were serving their first terms in a state institution.[2]

Meanwhile, large training schools have never proved effective in rehabilitating youthful offenders or steering them from crime. Recidivism from large training schools is uniformly high. A follow-up study on youth released from Minnesota's two training schools in 1991 found that 91 percent were arrested within five years of release. In Maryland, a study of 947 youths released from correctional facilities in 1994 found that 82 percent were referred to juvenile or criminal courts within two and one-half years after release.[3] In Washington State, 59 percent of incarcerated youth re-offended within one year and 68 percent within two years.[4]

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In fact, virtually every study examining recidivism among youth sentenced to juvenile training schools in the past three decades has found that at least 50 to 70 percent of offenders are arrested within one or two years after release. Clearly, training schools are not derailing the criminal careers of youthful offenders.

Why then do states continue to rely so heavily on training school incarceration – despite the powerful evidence against its effectiveness? One factor is that public pressures to "get tough" on youth crime have dissuaded political leaders from embracing less punitive rehabilitation strategies. Also, many local jurisdictions have declined to invest adequate resources in *community-based* juvenile corrections programs that can punish, supervise and rehabilitate young offenders without removing them to state institutions. Many states have created financial incentives against local investment in these needed programs.

Experience shows that states and localities which overcome these obstacles can substantially reduce their reliance on incarceration – saving millions for taxpayers, increasing public safety, and sparing many youth a needless and potentially damaging experience in corrections

UN-PRISONMENT: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

Steel-gray cement floor. White cinder-block walls. Narrow cot and open, stainless steel toilet. The room looks like tens of thousands of training school cells throughout our nation.

Yet here at the Riverbend juvenile correctional facility in St. Joseph, Missouri, this cell is the only one of its kind – and it is empty. Though the young people confined at Riverbend clean the cell every week, it has remained unoccupied for more than one year, reserved for emergencies that seldom arise. Rather than living in individual or two-person cells, the 33 residents of Riverbend – most convicted of felonies – sleep in three open dormitories. There are no handcuffs here, and no restraints. Only the 14-foot perimeter fence signals that this is a correctional facility.

Like all of Missouri's juvenile correctional facilities, Riverbend's 33-bed capacity is far smaller than the "training schools" that dominate juvenile corrections in most other states. Nationwide, only 12 percent of youth confined by public correctional agencies are housed in facilities with 30 or fewer residents, and 62 percent are confined in facilities with more than 110 residents.[5] Missouri closed it's only training school in 1983 (and converted it for use as an adult prison). Today in Missouri, no juvenile correctional facility contains more than 85 beds, and all except three contain 33 beds or fewer.

AN ALTERNATIVE TO "TRAINING SCHOOL"

Clearly, Missouri's secure juvenile corrections facilities look quite different from those in most states. They are also used more sparingly. Whereas neighboring Nebraska, Illinois, Kansas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, and Tennessee each confine between 200 and 2,200 youth in training schools and other high-security correctional facilities, Missouri confines only 180 youth in heavily locked facilities like Riverbend.[6] Three-fourths of youthful offenders committed to Missouri's youth corrections agency, the Division of Youth Services (DYS), are assigned to non-residential community programs, group homes, and less secure residential facilities.

Community-Based Programs. On any given day in Missouri, 255 juvenile offenders committed to state custody participate in "day treatment programs" like the Star program in Gladstone, where 15 youth spend from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. every weekday in a combination of academic education and counseling. After school, many participate in community-service or academic tutoring activities, or in individual or family counseling. For most youth, the day treatment program is a step down

A central tenet of the Missouri approach is that "treatment occurs 24-hours-per-day." Not only therapy sessions, but all activities must reinforce the messages of individual responsibility and discipline – and never reward youth for overpowering others or slacking in their assigned tasks or behavioral standards. Missouri maintains this 24-hour regimen by ensuring that youth are overseen at all times by at least two skilled, educated, and highly trained staff members.

following residential confinement. This allows DYS to provide eyes-on supervision when youth return to the community, and it provides the young people extra support during the difficult and dangerous transition period. Day treatment also enables youth to continue their education without interruption, rather than enduring a delay between their release from confinement and the opening of a new semester in the public schools.

In addition to day treatment, DYS assigns "trackers" to monitor and support 800 delinquent teens each day in community supervision. These trackers – usually college students pursuing a degree in social work or a related discipline – maintain close contact with delinquent young people and their families, offering support, mentoring, and troubleshooting assistance. In addition, 500 youth statewide are supervised each day on "aftercare" status – through which youth who have graduated from DYS programs continue to be supervised by the same case manager who has overseen their case all throughout their time with DYS.

Statewide, only 12 percent of youth committed to state custody are enrolled immediately into a community-based program. However, the length of stay for Missouri youth in residential care programs is typically short – median stay is six months – and most youth spend time in community programs following their return from residential care.

Less-Secure Residential Programs. In addition to these non-residential programs, the Missouri Department of Youth Services also operates six non-secure group homes with 10-12 beds each, as well as 18 "moderately secure" residential programs serving 20-30 youth each. The group homes typically house youth who have committed only status offenses or misdemeanors. These young people pose no danger to the community, but require more structure, support and supervision than their families can provide. Group home youth spend considerable time away from their facilities in jobs, group projects, and other community activities. Within the facilities, they participate in extensive individual, group and family counseling.

Missouri's "moderately secure" residential programs are dotted across the state in residential neighborhoods, state parks, and two college campuses. Though many youth sent to these facilities are felons, they too spend time in the community. Closely supervised by staff, residents regularly go on field trips and undertake community service projects. Those who make progress in the counseling component of the program and demonstrated trustworthiness are often allowed to perform jobs with local nonprofit or government agencies – thanks to a $678,000 per year DYS work experience program.

UN-PRISON ATMOSPHERE

At the moderately secure residential sites – and even at high-security facilities like Riverbend – the atmosphere is anything but prison-like. Residents joke easily with staff, with whom most are on a first name basis. The furnishings are new and cheerful, and the grounds are immaculate. Each of the facilities is organized into treatment groups of 10-12 youth who share a dormitory and participate together in academic classes and group therapy sessions. Many groups tend their own pet or pets – a dog, a turtle, a rabbit. Colorful bulletin boards designed by youth cover most of the walls – featuring their work or positive messages written by youth expressing gratitude to staff or other participants.

Youth attend six 50-minute periods of academic instruction every weekday all year round. They break into small groups for GED instruction or classwork toward their high school diplomas, work together on special projects or current events, or do individual lessons in a computer learning lab. In some DYS facilities, youth participate in a statewide stock market game where groups invest a theoretical $100,000 over 10 weeks. These DYS groups study the markets carefully, and many participants can knowledgeably discuss the stock performance of dozens of companies. Several DYS groups have ranked among the top groups statewide in the performance of their investments – outdueling classes from Missouri's regular public schools.

Treatment. In addition to academics, another critical element of the DYS residential programs is what residents and staff refer to as "treatment." Ninety-minute group sessions are conducted five times per week at all of Missouri's residential and day treatment programs. Facilitated by highly-trained, college-educated youth specialists and group leaders, these sessions help youth explore their own identities, reflect on their family histories, learn to understand their emotions, and build skills to recognize and reverse their destructive behavior patterns.

The walls at all DYS facilities are covered with work completed by youth as part of this treatment process. "Genograms" are family trees which include not only the names of relatives but also the problems and challenges they faced: alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, mental health problems, physical disabilities, or others. For the "line of body"exercise, participants trace the outline of their own bodies and then write and illustrate essential elements of their histories, hopes, emotions and identities.

In conversations with DYS youth, the impact of these treatment activities is unmistakable. Young people speak openly about their troubled pasts, their hopes for the future, and the changes they are making in themselves to ensure they don't repeat their past mistakes. Without prompting, many youth acknowledge the pain they have caused the victims of their crimes – and their determination not to create any future victims.

Families are also a critical element of the Missouri treatment approach. Unlike most other states, Missouri's juvenile corrections systems is divided into five sub-state regions, enabling almost every youth to be housed within a one or two hour drive from their family homes. DYS family therapists travel to the homes of residents' parents and guardians, or they drive family members to and from the residential facilities to make visits and participate in family therapy sessions.

In conversations with DYS youth, the impact of these treatment activities is unmistakable. Young people speak openly about their troubled pasts, their hopes for the future, and the changes they are making in themselves to ensure they don't repeat their past mistakes. Without prompting, many youth acknowledge the pain they have caused the victims of their crimes – and their determination not to create any future victims. Many relate how resistant they were at first to examining the emotional wounds and traumatic experiences that helped propel them into anti-social behaviors and thus into trouble. And those who have been confined for some time talk about the responsibility they feel to help new arrivals overcome their skepticism and fear about opening their feelings to others – and to themselves.

SAFETY, SAVINGS, AND SUCCESS

Missouri's emphasis on treatment and on least-restrictive care, rather than incarceration and punishment, is paying big dividends. While the Division of Youth Services does not track the long-term recidivism of youthful offenders released from its care, several indicators demonstrate that Missouri's unconventional approach is far more successful and cost-effective than the training school-oriented systems of most state juvenile corrections agencies.

Ohio and California: Using Financial Incentives to Reduce Counties' Dependence on State Training Schools

Whereas Missouri has developed its continuum of community-based and non-residential programs at the state level, other states are using financial incentives to encourage county courts and probation agencies to meet the challenge at the local level.

In Ohio, counties have historically inundated state juvenile correctional institutions with many non-serious offenders. That began to change in 1993, however, when the state legislature enacted a new funding initiative, **Reclaim Ohio**. Until then, the state bore the entire cost of training school confinement for any young person the counties chose to send, while counties bore the full cost for any young person retained in the community and enrolled in a non-residential or community-based treatment program. Thus, the counties faced a powerful financial incentive to commit youth to state facilities – whether or not such a commitment was in the best interests of the individual young person (or public safety).

Reclaim Ohio turned these incentives upside down. The new program offered counties a yearly funding allocation (based on each county's percentage of statewide felony delinquents) for the treatment of juvenile offenders. The state then began charging counties 75 percent of the costs for any young person committed to state care, but only 50 percent of the costs for any young person retained in a local corrections facility. Any unspent funds could be used by the counties for non-residential community corrections programs. Thus, Reclaim Ohio provided counties both the incentive and the means to establish local alternatives to training school confinement of juvenile offenders.

When it was tested in 1994 in nine pilot counties, Reclaim Ohio caused a 43 percent drop in commitments to state custody. Reclaim Ohio is now a permanent program statewide, serving more than 15,000 youth per year in local juvenile corrections programs costing $25.6 million in 1999 alone. Meanwhile, the percentage of juvenile felony offenders committed to state care declined every year from 1994 to 1997, and overcrowding in state training schools has fallen substantially.

California has also taken steps to reduce over-reliance on training school incarceration. For decades, the state paid almost the entire cost of confinement for any youth committed by county courts to the California Youth Authority. In 1996, California created a new sliding scale funding formula. For serious offenders, the state continued to pay the lion's share of costs for training school confinement. However, the state began charging counties 50 percent of the costs of confinement for moderately serious offenders, 75 percent of the bill for youth with less serious felonies, and 100 percent for youth with technical parole violations or misdemeanors – a hefty $2,600 per juvenile per month. The impact of this new funding scheme was immediate: within two years the admission rate for less serious offenders declined by 41 percent.

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California's Sliding Scale Funding Formula
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In each of the past two years, only 11 percent of young people released from DYS custody or transferred from a residential to a non-secure community program were either rearrested or returned to juvenile custody within one year. A 1993 DYS study found that only 28 percent of youth released from residential care violated parole or were recommitted to DYS within three years of

their release – a failure rate one-half to two-thirds below that of most other states. More than 90 percent of the 917 youth committed to DYS in 1991 were first time commitments; only 8 percent had been committed to DYS previously. And a study of five thousand youth discharged from DYS in the 1980s found that only 15 percent were arrested as adults.[7]

Perhaps most impressively, ***Missouri's juvenile corrections system has achieved these superior outcomes at a cost well below that of most states.*** By avoiding over-reliance on expensive residential confinement programs, limiting the length of stay in these programs, and minimizing recidivism, Missouri's Division of Youth Services operated with a budget of just $61 million in 2000 – about $94 for each young person in the state aged 10-17. By comparison, juvenile corrections budgets in the eight states surrounding Missouri average approximately $140 per young person – one third more than Missouri.[8]

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

Despite these impressive results, other states have not been willing or able to emulate Missouri. Less than a handful of states have entirely scrapped training schools, as Missouri has, and all but a handful have declined to develop a broad network of small residential and non-residential juvenile corrections programs. Why not? And how can youth advocates and taxpayer rights groups in other states overcome resistance and build support for Missouri-style juvenile justice reform? Several factors appear most important:

- **Attention to safety.** Given the public's understandable concerns about youth crime and violence, placing adjudicated youth into non-secure programs and allowing confined youth to participate in off-campus activities is a dangerous proposition. One major incident can create a firestorm of political protest. Missouri has been extremely successful in avoiding such incidents, thanks to a combination of: 1) **careful screening** of youthful offenders before allowing them to interact with the general population; 2) **careful supervision** of confined youth during occasional outings into the community; and 3) use of **trackers to monitor youth** residing in the community to identify and address problem situations as they arise.

- **High quality staff.** A central tenet of the Missouri approach is that "treatment occurs 24-hours-per-day." ***Not only therapy sessions, but all activities must reinforce the messages of individual responsibility and discipline – and never reward youth for overpowering others or slacking in their assigned tasks or behavioral standards.*** Missouri maintains this 24-hour regimen by ensuring that youth are overseen at all times by at least two skilled, educated, and highly trained staff members. All youth specialists and direct care workers in Missouri are college graduates, and all must complete 120 hours of in-service training during their first two years on the job. In most states, incarcerated youth spend only a handful of hours per week in therapy activities with trained counselors. For the remainder of the time, youth are overseen by less skilled, lower-paid correctional officers who often lack the skills (and perhaps the inclination) to rigorously enforce a treatment philosophy.

- **Constituency-building.** To overcome public fears of delinquent youth and political momentum toward ever-tougher approaches to delinquency, ***long-time Division of Youth Services Director Mark Steward has carefully cultivated a network of prominent supporters statewide – including leaders in both political parties.*** By inviting judges, state legislators and other powerful figures to tour its facilities – and by allowing youth themselves to guide these tours and describe in their own words the value of the DYS treatment process – Steward and DYS have gained the faith of Missouri leaders across the political spectrum. Also, by placing dozens of facilities throughout the state, it has built a powerful base of grassroots support to maintain its decentralized programming at a time when most other states are only building more training school beds. "Missouri has resisted the get large philosophy,

mostly [because] Steward went out and talked with people around the state and built a consensus in support of his approach," reports Paul DeMuro, a leading juvenile justice consultant. "Steward may be the most longstanding juvenile corrections director in the nation. He knows how to work the system, and he's very well respected."[9]

CONCLUSION

Missouri's *un-prisonment* approach to juvenile justice is by no means perfect. Investments in community-based delinquency prevention efforts are not extensive statewide, and the state contributes only a modest (though growing) $6 million per year to support local juvenile court programs that intervene early in the delinquency careers of adolescents and reduce the chances that youth will be committed to DYS in the future. Missouri also fails to collect long-term recidivism data for youth after leaving its juvenile corrections programs.

On balance, though, ***Missouri's approach should be a model for the nation. Its success offers definitive proof that states can protect the public, rehabilitate youth, and safeguard taxpayers far better if they abandon incarceration as the core of their juvenile corrections systems.***

"It's the best system in the country in my opinion for [the correctional phases of] juvenile justice," says Paul DeMuro. Bart Lubow, a Senior Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, also ranks Missouri's Division of Youth Services among the finest juvenile corrections agencies in the nation. "It shows what's possible," Lubow says, "when you put in place a smart array of options and you tailor the dispositions to the needs and risks of the individual kids."[10]

Operating Agency	Missouri Division of Youth Services
Program Type	State Juvenile Corrections Agency
Program Goals	Public Safety, Rehabilitation of Youthful Offenders
Target Group	Youthful Offenders Committed to State Custody
Key Strategies	Small correctional facilities, heavy treatment emphasis, extensive use of non-residential "tracker" and "day treatment" programs, intensive family outreach
Primary Funding Source(s)	State of Missouri, US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Evidence of Effectiveness	Very low recidivism, far lower cost than juvenile corrections systems in most surrounding states
Contact Information	Mark Steward, Director Missouri Division of Youth Services P.O. Box 447 Jefferson City, MO 65102 Phone: (573) 751-3324; Fax: (573) 526-4494

CHALLENGE #2:

OFFER A BROAD ARRAY OF COMMUNITY-BASED SANCTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS FOR DELINQUENT BUT NON-DANGEROUS YOUTH

"A judge in one county has many options to craft appropriate orders for young offenders. In the next county over, especially if it is an urban county, a judge may have very few options between probation and incarceration. That's like choosing between aspirin or a lobotomy for a migraine."[11]

Christine Todd Whitman, Governor of New Jersey

The vast majority of young people arrested and referred to juvenile courts nationwide are not incarcerated. Instead, 43 percent are never formally charged with an offense, and two-fifths of those who are charged in juvenile courts either have their cases dropped or subsequently sign an informal probation agreement. Thus, only one-third of delinquency cases ultimately result in a court finding of delinquency (i.e., a conviction). Among youth found to be delinquent, more than two-thirds receive a sentence of probation, release, or alternative sanction. Thus, only 11 percent of delinquency cases result in out-of-home placement to corrections or to a group home or residential treatment center.

Within our nation's juvenile justice systems, however, most of the energy and the funding are devoted to confining these 11 percent. Far less effort and creativity, and many fewer resources, are devoted to appropriately punishing youth who remain at home or to addressing the underlying problems that may be causing their delinquent behavior.

Theoretically, juvenile courts have a wide range of options to deal with youthful offenders who are allowed to remain in the community. These options can include restitution, community service, home curfew, academic tutoring, anger management training, individual or family counseling, substance abuse treatment, plus many others, or supervision by a probation officer without any of these activities. If a youth violates probation, the court might have a range of possible punishments – tightened curfew, added community service, short-term "quick dip" incarceration, more frequent drug testing, or reduced privileges.

Or the judge might have few of these options – as is too often the case. As Eric Joy, director of the Allegheny County (PA) juvenile courts, told a congressional committee in 1997, "Utilizing a system of progressive sanctions can be difficult if the means to carry them out are not available."[12]

One disposition that historically has not been available in most communities, or has been used only for a select few, is intensive non-residential treatment and/or youth development services – aggressive intervention programs to resolve behavior problems in young people's natural environment. This gap is not due to a lack of willingness on the part of juvenile courts and probation agencies to invest

Theoretically, juvenile courts have a wide range of options to deal with youthful offenders who are allowed to remain in the community. These options can include restitution, community service, home curfew, academic tutoring, anger management training, individual or family counseling, substance abuse treatment, plus many others.... Or the judge might have few of these options – as is too often the case.

money in treatment programs; rather, most jurisdictions regularly place troubled youth into group homes and residential treatment programs, often paying $200 or more per day for these services. Yet, in most communities, juvenile justice authorities have declined to invest in intensive programming for youth who remain in their own homes.

This failure is especially striking given the tremendous success achieved by a handful of intensive non-residential program models such as Multisystemic Therapy, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, and Functional Family Therapy (see Challenge #3). These and other intensive non-residential juvenile corrections programs, even when they provide extensive services, cost far less per day than training schools or residential treatment programs. Often, their results are as good or better. Yet these intensive community-based programs, even more than other components of a progressive sanctions continuum, remain all too rare nationwide.

As the following pages explain, Tarrant County, Texas is one jurisdiction demonstrating that where intensive non-residential programming is provided – and particularly when it is integrated into a seamless continuum of graduated sanctions and services – the results are often both superior to and less costly than those realized using the old "aspirin or lobotomy" approach.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY-BASED CONTINUUM TARRANT COUNTY (TX) JUVENILE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Soon after George W. Bush was first elected Governor of Texas in 1994 with juvenile justice reform as a major plank in his campaign platform, the Texas legislature authorized $37.5 million dollars in general revenue bonds for construction or expansion of local juvenile corrections facilities.

Half of these funds were designated for Texas' seven most populous urban counties, and six of the counties snatched up the funds and quickly added more than 500 new correctional beds. One jurisdiction, however, opted not to accept the funds. Despite the fact that it had many fewer correctional beds than most urban counties even before the new construction began, Tarrant County declined its $3.7 million share of the state's offer.

Why? Because when the county juvenile probation department conducted an internal study, it found that added correctional beds were unnecessary. Moreover, while the new Texas program would pay the bill for construction, it would not pay most of the ongoing costs for operating and maintaining the new facilities. Thus, going ahead with construction would cost county taxpayers millions per year in added costs once the beds were built. Tarrant County decided that it could protect the public better, serve delinquent youth more effectively, and save county taxpayers more money by investing a continuum of non-residential, community-based responses to delinquency. In doing so, the county ratified its reputation as a lone ranger in a state where "law and order" have reigned for decades and "zero tolerance" increasingly rules juvenile justice.

THE TARRANT COUNTY CONTINUUM

The above anecdote offers just one illustration of how Tarrant County's approach differs from conventional practice both in Texas and nationwide. During the 1990s, the Texas Youth Commission nearly tripled the number of youth it incarcerated each night in state training schools. Most county probation agencies in Texas also took increasingly hard line approaches toward juvenile offenders. Many erected new boot camps or other correctional centers, and many expanded their pre-trial detention centers – further adding to the number of youth incarcerated statewide.

Tarrant County, home to the city of Fort Worth, took a different approach. Instead of building detention and correctional facilities, Tarrant County developed an array of programs and

During the 1990s, the Texas Youth Commission nearly tripled the number of youth it incarcerated each night in state training schools. Most county probation agencies in Texas also took increasingly hard line approaches toward juvenile offenders. Many erected new boot camps or other correctional centers, and many expanded their pre-trial detention centers – further adding to the number of youth incarcerated statewide.... Tarrant County, home to the city of Fort Worth, took a different approach.

punishments to sanction juvenile offenders while at home. Instead of sending large numbers of youth to state correctional institutions, Tarrant County placed most delinquents into non-residential programs. Instead of placing youth accused of less serious offenses on routine probation – providing few services and little support – Tarrant enrolled most into rigorous counseling, community service, and/or youth development programs designed to reverse behavior problems before they escalated into serious criminality.

Tarrant County Advocate Program. Back in 1992, Tarrant County juvenile services director Carey Cockerell began scouring the nation for local correctional programs that could serve as alternatives to committing young offenders to the Texas Youth Commission (which operates the state's correctional training schools), or to residential treatment facilities for adolescents that cost the county up to $200 per day (and produced only mixed success). Cockerell seized upon Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), an operation based in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania that has provided intensive support and supervision to more than fifty thousand delinquent and troubled youth over the past 25 years in seven states and the District of Columbia.

Designed as an alternative both to pre-trial detention and to incarceration and other out-of-home placements following adjudication, YAP trains and assigns local community residents to serve as advocates for troubled teens. These advocates mentor and monitor the youth, and they facilitate a child/family team including neighbors, volunteers, professional staff (such as child welfare workers, or clinical social workers) relatives, parents, and youth themselves. By keeping close tabs on delinquent youth, the advocate programs offer a cost-effective alternative to confinement for youth who pose no immediate danger to themselves or others. In addition, advocates facilitate a "wraparound" services approach that helps youth and their families build on their strengths, solicit needed counseling and support services, and stabilize behavior problems.

With funding from Cockerell's agency, YAP established the Tarrant County Advocate Program (TCAP) late in 1992 in one high-crime Fort Worth neighborhood. Within a year, the commitments to secure juvenile corrections facilities dropped by 44 percent for youth in the targeted neighborhood. In 1999, TCAP served 385 young people. Despite a record of multiple prior arrests among many participants, 91 percent of the young people discharged from the program did not incur a more serious delinquent charge (although some youth were re-arrested on minor charges) during their 4-6 month stay in the program. In 2000, TCAP's success rate dipped to 78 percent.[13]

A Comprehensive Continuum. Today, TCAP is only one element in a comprehensive continuum of services and sanctions for youthful offenders in Tarrant County. Other program offerings include:

- **Community service restitution** and **monetary restitution**, in which youth are court-ordered to perform 30-100 hours of service or make a financial payment to victims. During 2000, 996 juveniles completed 19,775 hours of work for local community agencies. In addition, Tarrant County juvenile offenders made monetary restitution payments of more than $65,000.

By spurning calls to build more detention cells and place more youth into expensive confinement programs, Tarrant County has saved local taxpayers millions. And contrary to the fears of an alarmed public, Tarrant's home-based, treatment-oriented approach has led to a substantial reduction in juvenile crime.

- **Family preservation**, providing intensive home-based counseling for troubled youth and their families. The program offers a combination of counseling, 24-hour crisis intervention, and training in social skills (such as parenting, anger management, conflict resolution and problem solving) for families of emotionally disturbed youth at risk for commitment to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC). In 1999 and 2000, 389 of the 455 youth (85.5 percent) completing the program successfully averted a TYC placement. For the life of the program (January 1992 through July 2000), just 103 of 1,141 participants (9 percent) were subsequently committed to TYC, and three-fourths of the remaining participants had no subsequent contact with the juvenile court.

- **Juvenile Drug Court**, which offers substance-abusing youth the opportunity to enroll in supervised drug treatment as an alternative to formal probation. Youth are monitored closely in their treatment and drug tested regularly, and charges are dismissed when and if youth complete their course of treatment successfully. Of 172 youth who exited the program in 2000,

San Diego County
The Comprehensive Strategy

Like Tarrant County, San Diego County (CA) is also working hard to build a continuum of local sanctions and intervention programs for juvenile offenders. San Diego was one of the first communities in the nation to receive federal funding to implement the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's "Comprehensive Strategy" against juvenile violence.

In 1996, San Diego embarked on an intensive study and planning effort involving more than 200 area leaders. Since then, it has mounted an impressive flurry of new activity aimed at reducing youth crime and promoting the healthy development of young people. New efforts include: intensive full-day programs for high-risk first offenders and for other youth at risk of out-of-home placements, significantly expanded adolescent substance abuse treatment, new after-school programming, and new comprehensive community centers to serve youth and their families.

San Diego has raised well over $10 million to support these efforts since 1996. However, while far more extensive than the services offered in most jurisdictions, the county's new model programs still serve only a fraction of the juvenile population that could benefit. San Diego's once serious detention overcrowding problem has begun to ease as the detention population declined from 630 in 1998 to 470 in 1999. However, the detention rate remains high in relation to other jurisdictions of similar size.

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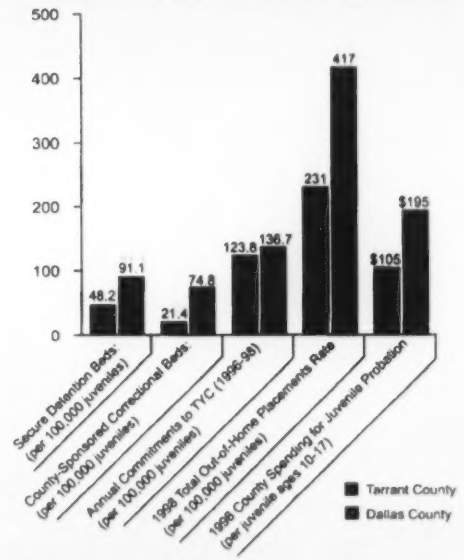
TARRANT COUNTY VS. DALLAS COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND COSTS



Total Juvenile Populations:
Tarrant County (149,407), Dallas County (245,838)

Sources: Data supplied by Tarrant and Dallas County Probation Departments.

135 (78 percent) graduated successfully, while 35 were returned to court to face formal charges. Juvenile Drug Court participants submitted 1,958 urinalysis drug tests during 2000, of which 257 (13 percent) showed a positive result for illicit drugs.

- **Non-residential sex offender treatment,** provided by thee local community agencies to youth accused of indecent exposure, indecency with a younger child, or sexual assault. As of January 2001, only one of the 183 youth enrolled into the program from 1998-2000 committed a new sexual offense. In 2000, 66 of 72 youth (92 percent) completing the program were successful, meaning that they completed the requirements of the treatment and were committed to the Texas Youth Authority or placed into residential treatment

- **Intensive supervision probation (ISP)** for juvenile probationers at highest risk for placement into TYC. Unlike the ISP programs in many other counties, the Tarrant County ISP staff not only supervise youthful offenders and monitor their compliance with curfews and probation orders. They also support families and provide referrals to academic, vocational, and counseling programs that help keep high-risk youth away from trouble. Of 304 offenders completing ISP in 2000, 82 percent completed the program without being committed to TYC or other residential placements, or transferred to stand trial as an adult. This success rate was well above a state-imposed standard of 75 percent.

CROSS-COUNTY CONTRAST

Unlike most large jurisdictions in Texas, Tarrant County operates no local boot camp or correctional ranch programs for adolescent offenders. Moreover, Tarrant's juvenile detention center (housing adolescent offenders pending trial) has just 72 beds – many fewer than the detention facilities of other large counties in Texas or nationwide. Beyond detention, Tarrant County utilizes only two small residential programs for juvenile offenders. One uses a 16-bed wing of the county detention center for short-term (10-20 days) confinement of youth who violate probation (instead of immediate commitment to TYC); and the second – a new program in 2000 – uses another 16-bed unit to provide intensive treatment and supervision for juvenile sex offenders.

Nor has Tarrant County followed the path of many Texas counties by sending as many young people as possible to the state corrections agency, thereby avoiding the expense of punishing and supervising offenders locally. Tarrant County committed an average of 185 teens per year to TYC between 1996 and 1998. That's 35 percent fewer than the average (285) committed by Bexar County (San Antonio) which has almost an identical population as Tarrant, and barely half the average number (336) committed by neighboring Dallas County (whose population is only 50 percent larger than Tarrant's).

Right Next Door and a World Apart. In fact, comparing Tarrant County with Dallas County offers perhaps the most vivid evidence of how

sharply Tarrant County differs in its approach to juvenile crime from most Texas counties – and how much more cost-effective its non-punitive continuum is in reigning in juvenile crime and reducing recidivism. Dallas and Tarrant share an airport and a 30 mile border as well as a similar history, similar demographics, and a similar economy. Yet the juvenile justice systems of Dallas and Tarrant Counties are a world apart.

Dallas County, with a youth population of 212,000, operates a juvenile detention facility with 224 beds to confine youths awaiting trial or pending correctional placement. Dallas County also operates two local correctional facilities with capacity for 184 youth. Tarrant County, with a juvenile population two-thirds as large as Dallas County (144,000 vs. 212,000), maintains one-third as many detention beds (72 versus 224), and – unlike Dallas – Tarrant County maintains only the 32 local correctional beds detailed above. Nonetheless, Tarrant County sends many fewer juvenile offenders to TYC than Dallas County. (See Table p.19) Overall in 1998, Dallas County placed almost twice as many youth into out-of-home dispositions per capita as Tarrant County (417 versus 231 per 100,000). Dallas taxpayers also spent far more local tax dollars on juvenile justice than Tarrant – $42 million per year (equal to $200 per young person in the county) versus $15 million in Tarrant ($105 per young person). Yet juvenile crime rates dropped substantially in both counties during the 1990s, and they look quite similar today. Dallas County had higher rates of juvenile murder, rape, and robbery from 1995-97, Tarrant County suffered higher rates of aggravated assault and a higher overall juvenile arrest rate.

LESS COST, MORE SAFETY

By spurning calls to build more detention cells and place more youth into expensive confinement programs, Tarrant County has saved local taxpayers millions. And contrary to the fears of an alarmed public, Tarrant's home-based, treatment-oriented approach has led to a substantial reduction in juvenile crime. In fact, ***the failure rates of youth enrolled in Tarrant County's community corrections programs consistently rank among the lowest of any urban county in Texas.*** Likewise, an August 2000 report from Texas' non-partisan Criminal Justice Policy Council found that the long-term recidivism rates of Tarrant County youth placed into non-incarceration programs are second lowest of Texas' major urban counties. Less cost, more safety.

Operating Agency	Tarrant County Juvenile Services
Program Type	County Probation Agency
Program Goals	Effective Treatment for Delinquent and Troubled Youth, Public Safety, Cost-Effectiveness
Target Group	Juvenile offenders in Tarrant County
Key Strategies	Continuum of non-residential sanctions and services, minimum reliance on detention, incarceration, or other expensive out-of-home confinement
Primary Funding Source(s)	Tarrant County, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
Evidence of Effectiveness	Reduced juvenile crime rates since early '90s; very low failure rates for youth in local probation programs
Contact Information	Carey Cockerell, Director Tarrant County Juvenile Services 2701 Kimbo Road Fort Worth, TX 76111 Phone: (817) 838-4600; Fax: (817) 838-4646

CHALLENGE #3:

REPLICATE RESEARCH-PROVEN PROGRAM STRATEGIES TO REDUCE DELINQUENCY

"To date, most of the resources committed to the prevention and control of youth violence, both at the national and local levels, have been invested in untested programs based on questionable assumptions and delivered with little consistency or quality control."[14]

Delbert Elliot, Director, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

Twenty-five years ago, a prestigious study panel examined the evidence that had been gathered to that time about the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for adult and juvenile offenders. Their findings were stark – and became popularized in some circles as providing the definitive word that "nothing works" in rehabilitation.[15]

In fact, these researchers never found that nothing works – only that social scientists had yet to validate rehabilitation strategies in careful scientific trials. Nonetheless, the reality as recently as 20 years ago was that we had little evidence that any particular models made a marked difference in controlling crime or delinquency.

In 2001, those seem like the dark ages.

Over the past two decades prevention and juvenile justice policy innovators have developed and validated a number of intervention models that substantially lower either recidivism by youthful offenders or the onset of delinquent behavior by youth at risk for delinquency.

Some pundits and political leaders today still like to pretend that nothing works, that prevention is just a dangerous waste of money. On the other hand, some advocates like to pretend that we always knew how to prevent crime – that it's just common sense. The reality is that only in the past two decades have we begun to figure out what works and doesn't work – and some of those findings have been unexpected.

For youth already engaged in delinquency, three models have emerged as proven, powerful successes. All three work with young people in their own homes and communities, rather than in institutions, and they focus heavily on the family environment. One strategy, called Multisystemic Therapy (MST), has reduced future days in corrections or residential treatment by at least 47 percent in eight scientific trials. MST costs only about $6,000 per youth, less than one-fourth the cost of an eight-month stay in juvenile corrections.

Another home-based strategy, Functional Family Therapy, has reduced the recidivism rates of delinquent youth by 25 to 80 percent in repeated trials dating back to 1972. It costs only $2,000 per youth. The third model, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, combines short-term, therapeutic foster care with intensive counseling for the natural family, followed by rapid re-unification and ongoing support. It reduced subsequent offending by more than 50 percent among chronic delinquents, a recent study found, and saved more than $14 in future justice system costs for each extra dollar spent on the treatment.

Despite these successes, however, none of these models is in widespread use today. Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy each served approximately 5,000 young people in 2000 – this in a nation that arrests more than 2.5 million adolescents each year and confines more than 100,000 every night. Likewise, despite its overwhelming advantages over other forms of

treatment, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care is being replicated in only a handful of sites nationwide.

By heeding the research, by replicating what works, America has an opportunity to substantially improve its success against juvenile crime.

PUTTING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE YOUTH VILLAGES IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

During his first 13 years at the helm of Youth Villages, a youth-serving agency based in Memphis, Tennessee, Patrick Lawler helped the nonprofit grow from three residential treatment facilities serving 25 emotionally disturbed youth around Memphis to 23 residences serving 240 youth throughout Tennessee as well as in Mississippi and Arkansas.

The only problem was, despite long and expensive stays in its residential treatment facilities, many of the young people served by Youth Villages relapsed into delinquency or other problem behaviors soon after leaving. As with similar systems across the country, Lawler's agency was never punished for this problem, because Tennessee never required residential treatment providers to monitor the long-term success of participants. "The state would ask us at the end of each year what we did with their money," Lawler recalls, "and we would tell them the truth: we spent it."

In 1993, Lawler hired a local MBA candidate to examine his operation with fresh eyes. Not only were many youth being incarcerated or returning to residential treatment after leaving Youth Villages, the study found, but the families of troubled youth were often plagued with urgent needs, and no one was helping them.

LOOKING TO THE RESEARCH

Based on this report, Lawler looked to the research and turned Youth Villages' operations upside down.

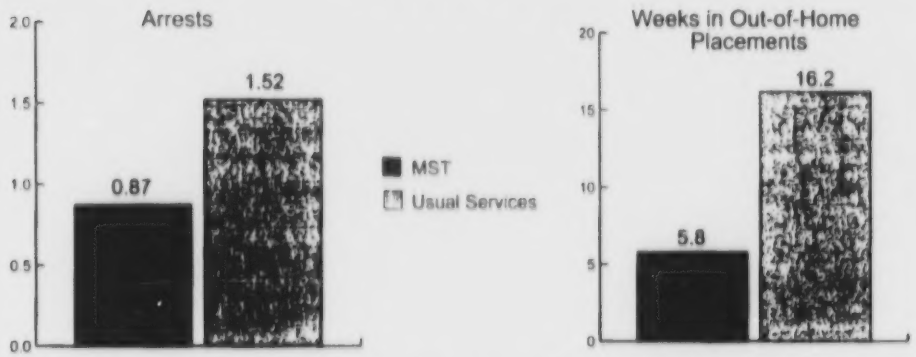
Multisystemic Therapy. First Lawler identified Multisystemic Therapy (MST), a non-residential model designed by University of South Carolina psychologist Scott Henggeler. MST employs trained mental health counselors to work with troubled teens in their homes, engaging not just the young person but his or her whole family based on the understanding that most adolescent misbehavior can be traced back to the family system. Therapists seek to determine the negative dynamics that propel the young person toward delinquency – be they poor parenting, substance abuse, a learning disability, or attachment to delinquent peers. The therapist engages the family in strategies to overcome these root problems, while at the same time coaching parents in behavior management strategies to begin re-establishing order and respect in the home. During the process, therapists might refer the youth, parents, or even siblings to a wide range of possible supports – a substance abuse program, a job placement service, an after-school youth program, whatever it takes to overcome the problems and stabilize the family.

Henggeler's model has been tested in eight scientific trials since 1986. In every case, it dramatically reduced the number of days that delinquent and otherwise trouble youth spend in corrections or residential treatment compared with conventional treatment strategies. Violent and chronic offenders treated with MST in rural South Carolina had 43 percent fewer arrests, committed 66 percent fewer self-reported offenses, and spent 64 percent fewer weeks in youth

[Multisystemic Therapy] has been tested in eight scientific trials since 1986. In every case, it dramatically reduced the number of days that delinquent and otherwise trouble youth spend in corrections or residential treatment compared with conventional treatment strategies. Multisystemic Therapy costs about $6,000 per youth, far less than incarceration or placement into a group home or residential treatment center.

MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY VERSUS USUAL JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES FOR SERIOUS ADOLESCENT OFFENDERS

Results of a Randomized Trial in Simpsonville, SC
59 Weeks After Treatment



Source: Henggeler, Scott W., *Treating Serious Anti-Social Behavior in Youth: The MST Approach* (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile and Delinquency Prevention, May 1997).

prisons or treatment centers than youth randomly assigned to usual court sanctions and treatments.[16] (See Table #2.) In Columbia, Missouri, youth who completed MST showed a five-year re-arrest rate of 22.1 percent – less than one-third that of youth who completed individual therapy (71.4 percent). In two other clinical studies, MST reduced days spent in out-of-home placements by 47 percent and 50 percent compared with youth treated in traditional programs.[17] Multisystemic Therapy costs about $6,000 per youth, far less than incarceration or placement into a group home or residential treatment center.

Based on this track record, Lawler began hiring and training a new breed of counselors in 1993 to engage the families of troubled young people using the MST model. The first and most important step for these counselors was to examine the underlying conditions in a young person's life, and then to "find the fit" – the causal connection through which problem behaviors are the logical outcome of a young person's overall life situation. The next crucial step was to identify strengths and assets in the young person's life that might reverse the problem. MST therapists at Youth Villages helped youth pursue personal interests and goals by connecting them with activities in anything from employment to sports to computers – and thereby weakened the young people's attachments to anti-social peers. At the same time, MST therapists worked with parents, teachers, and other responsible adults to promote responsible behavior. Therapists concentrated most on caretakers – helping them overcome their own psychological, emotional, and substance abuse issues, and teaching caretakers to provide positive and consistent structure and discipline within the home. Once the young person's behavior was stabilized, counselors focused on building an ongoing support system for the family to ensure success after the MST process concluded.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care. In 1996, Lawler identified another research-based program, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care. Designed in Oregon to help serve troubled youth whose families remained unprepared to care for them, the program offers two key services simultaneously: 1) short-term therapeutic foster care, in which troubled youth live with trained foster parents who employ strict behavioral monitoring with support from a licensed therapist; and 2) intensive counseling and parenting skills training for the youths' parent(s) or legal guardian(s). After six to nine months, following a series of increasingly frequent and lengthy visits home, the families are reunited. Ongoing counseling continues until the home

situation is stable and the young person is re-acclimated to his or her home environment.

Like MST, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care has a strong foundation in research. In one clinical trial with serious and chronic youthful offenders, youth participating in Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care proved twice as likely as youth placed into groups homes to complete the program (and not run away), and they spent an average of 75 fewer days incarcerated over the subsequent two years.[18] (See Table #3.) In another trial focused on very serious offenders, youth in Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care were arrested less than half as often as youth sent to group homes (2.6 vs. 5.4 arrests). They also spent less than half as many days incarcerated following treatment and were six times as likely to remain arrest free in the year after treatment (41 percent to seven percent).[19] As a result, the treatment foster care program saved $14 in justice costs for each dollar spent on treatment.

For Youth Villages, the addition of Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care filled an important gap between its continuing residential treatment services and its new in-home (MST) therapy. By adding MST and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, Youth Villages created a comprehensive continuum of services for troubled youth ranging from home-based (MST) counseling to treatment foster care to residential treatment and hospitalization.

BRINGING SUCCESS TO SCALE

As the clinical trials predicted, Youth Villages' success rates soared using the MST and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care models, while costs plummeted. More than 80 percent of youth participating in the new program (which cost as little as $6,000 per youth) continued to live successfully at home one year after treatment, Lawler reports, compared to about 63 percent of youth one year after returning home from the old residential treatment program (which ran more than $50,000 for a typical ten-month stay).

Launching these family-oriented programs was the easy part, however. Lawler then had to convince state bureaucrats to pay for them. He also had to build in sophisticated supervision and accountability systems to ensure that programs which worked well in small-scale tests remained successful when implemented agency-wide.

Changing Funding Formulas to Reward Success. Historically, Tennessee's policy for serving emotionally disturbed youth – like the policies of many other states – was simple: if a young person is a danger to oneself or others, the state would pay for hospitalization or placement into residential treatment center or group home. If the troubled young person was not a danger, the state provided little support beyond out-patient counseling from underfunded and ill-equipped county mental health departments. Funding for intensive, family-focused treatment had no place in the state's plans, and reimbursement for any agency providing these services was not permitted.

Thus, while Youth Villages' received up to $200 per day from Tennessee for each young person in its longstanding residential programs, it could not collect a penny from the state for its $65-$70 per day MST program – even though the home-based services were producing better outcomes than the more-expensive residential treatment.

Based on the success of Youth Villages' initial tests of MST (funded with private grants), Lawler began seeking a change in state funding. For two years, state officials ignored his calls. Finally in 1995, with a new governor in office and the state budget in deep deficit, Tennessee accepted Youth Villages' offer to tear up its existing contracts, serve one-third more youth for the same money, and for the first time guarantee positive outcomes for most youth following treatment. In return, Youth Villages gained the freedom to offer a continuum of services, including both home-based and residential treatment.

Thanks to its growing use of MST and treatment foster care, Youth Villages served 1,600 Tennessee youth in 2000 – four times the number it served in 1993. Many spent a short time in residential treatment, but most proceeded quickly to family-focused non-residential therapy. Eighty percent

Putting Proven Models Into Practice: Washington State's Community Juvenile Accountability Act

In 1995, Washington State juvenile justice leaders had a bold idea. Based on increasingly compelling research showing that a small handful of chronic offenders commit the bulk of all serious juvenile crime, they convinced Washington's legislature to support a new early intervention program – funding counties to provide enhanced treatment services and supervision for their highest-risk youth offenders.

Unfortunately, it didn't work. A preliminary evaluation by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, a state-funded research agency, found that youth enrolled into the enhanced programs proved no less likely to re-offend than non-participating youth. In implementing the program, most counties had simply intensified their existing strategies without consulting the research into what works.

Based on this experience, Washington's legislature enacted a new law in 1997, the Community Juvenile Accountability Act (CJAA). It promised new funding for local juvenile courts, but only for programs with proven power to reduce re-offending rates cost-effectively. After the law was passed, the Institute for Public Policy searched for juvenile justice intervention program models with proven impact, and then it conducted elaborate cost-benefit analyses to demonstrate that the models were indeed cost-effective.[20] Consulting with local court officials, the Institute identified five programs for potential replication using the CJAA funding stream – Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST), both profiled in Challenge #3, along with less intensive program models to control aggression, provide community mentors, and improve coordination among agencies serving delinquent and high-risk youth.

Following a statewide training conference, local officials from the state's 34 local juvenile courts initially selected to implement only two of the models – FFT and "Anger Replacement Therapy," a 10-week behavioral skills training curriculum. The State legislature appropriated $7.65 million to support these two programs from July 1999 through June 2001, and three counties also established MST programs using federal block grant funds.

As of August 2000, Washington's counties had developed more than 40 local replication programs and enrolled more than 2,000 youth. The Institute for Public Policy has begun an intensive evaluation comparing the outcomes for participating youth with those for similar youth placed on waiting lists. While program evaluation outcomes will not be known until 2002, Policy Institute analyst Steve Aos believes the program is already a success. The extensive consultation between his agency and local juvenile courts has helped break down longstanding mistrust between the state and local officials, Aos says: "It meets a test of intergovernmental cooperation that is often lacking....

"For the state level," Aos says, "it has been positive because the state is saying for the first time that we're only going to put our money into programs with a track record of success."[21]

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will remain home successfully for at least nine months. Based on these results, Tennessee has made its arrangement with Youth Villages the model for all contracts to serve troubled adolescents statewide.

As a result, Youth Villages now employs 100 MST counselors and clinical supervisors and serves more than 500 families in MST per year, making Youth Villages by far the largest provider of MST services in the nation. Likewise, Youth Villages serves 420 youth every day in Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, making it one of only a handful sites nationwide to adopt this powerful intervention model.

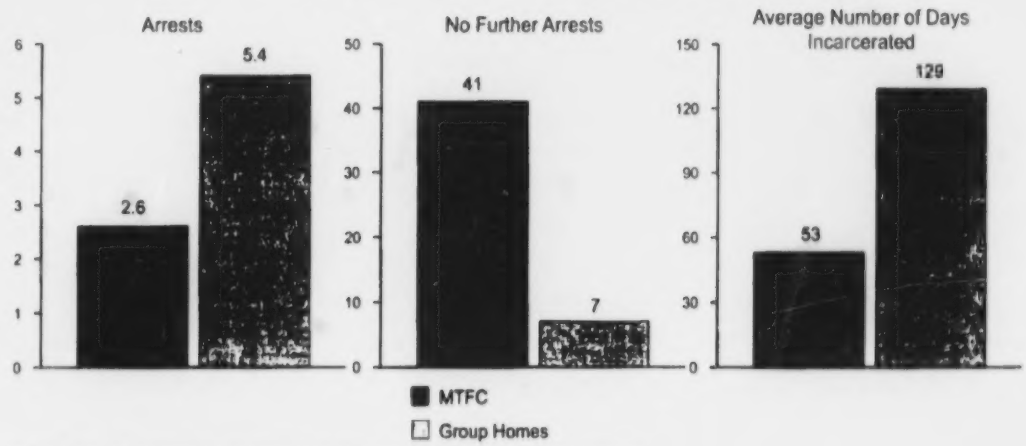
However, in neighboring Arkansas (as in most states), rules still forbid payments for most home based services. Arkansas contracts with Youth Villages to care for troubled adolescents, but only in residential treatment centers, not in home-based counseling. As a result, Arkansas pays more to reap less safety and less success.

Ensuring Program Quality. Unlike many therapy methods, MST is highly regimented. The program is based on nine core principles, and the process for implementing these principles is spelled out in exacting detail in MST program manuals. Moreover, MST calls for therapists to review each case three times per week – once with their supervisor, once with the supervisor plus other therapists on their treatment team, and once with a senior MST clinical consultant. Likewise, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care is guided by a specific treatment philosophy and a clear set of treatment procedures.

In his ongoing research into the effectiveness of MST, program designer Scott Henggeler has found that fidelity to these program requirements is a critical factor for success. While no clinical trial of MST has resulted in failure, Henggeler has found in several studies that participants achieve far better outcomes when providers follow the MST guidelines. For instance, when MST was tested against usual juvenile justice services for juvenile offenders in Orangeburg and Spartanburg, South Carolina, an analysis of therapists reports "indicated that outcomes were substantially better in cases where treatment adherence ratings were high."[22]

For many local nonprofit and county mental health agencies, adhering to these exacting procedures and strict standards is unfamiliar and difficult. However,

MULTIDIMENSIONAL TREATMENT FOSTER CARE VERSUS GROUP HOMES
Results of a Randomized Trial for Chronic Juvenile Offenders



Population: Delinquent boys averaging 13 prior arrests and 4.6 felony arrests.

Source: Chamberlain, Patricia, *Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Eight: Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care* (Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 1998).

under Patrick Lawler, Youth Villages has won several awards for innovative management and quality assurance, including two "Excellence in Service Quality" awards from the United Way of America. Youth Villages' capacity to develop the elaborate quality assurance systems required to implement complex programs effectively has been an important key to its success in bringing promising research into productive practice.

Operating Agency	Youth Villages, Inc.
Program Type	Private, Nonprofit Youth Serving Agency
Program Goals	Effective Treatment of Emotionally Disturbed and Delinquent Youth
Target Group	Youth with emotional disturbances who have been placed into residential treatment programs
Key Strategies	Continuum of care including home-based counseling using the acclaimed Multisystemic Therapy (MST) model, and treatment foster care using a proven program model developed in Oregon
Primary Funding Source(s)	Tennessee Department of Children's Services, States of Mississippi and Arkansas
Evidence of Effectiveness	Reduced cost-per-participant and substantially improved success rates for Youth Villages participants since adoption of MST and treatment foster care models
Contact Information	Patrick W. Lawler, Administrator Youth Villages, Inc. P.O. Box 341154 Memphis, TN 38184-1154 Phone: (901) 252-7200; Fax: (901) 252-7280 www.youthvillages.org

CHALLENGE #4:

IDENTIFY AND INTERVENE INTENSIVELY WITH YOUTH AT EXTREME RISK FOR CHRONIC DELINQUENCY

"The lack of consistent intervention with juvenile offenders soon after their initial contact with the police or other authorities has long been recognized as perhaps the single largest gap in services for troubled youth."[23]

National Council on Crime and Delinquency

In 1972, Marvin Wolfgang and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania published a seminal study, *Delinquency in a Birth Cohort*, which tracked delinquency and criminal behavior among ten thousand Philadelphians born in 1945 throughout childhood, adolescence and young adulthood.[24] Wolfgang repeated the analysis with more than 25,000 youth born in 1958, and in recent years several more cohort studies have been conducted by other criminologists.[25] In each of these studies, a small group of boys – just six to eight percent – committed the majority of all serious and violent juvenile crimes. For instance, Wolfgang's second analysis found that seven percent of Philadelphia youth committed 61 percent of all offenses, 65 percent of all aggravated assaults, 60 percent of homicides, 75 percent of rapes, and 73 percent of robberies.[26] The implications are obvious: ***To be effective in reducing youth crime, prevention and intervention efforts must target those young people at highest risk to become chronic offenders.***

More recently, delinquency scholars have identified clear developmental pathways that children follow on the way to becoming chronic delinquents and then adult criminals. Experts have isolated critical "risk" and "protective" factors that influence whether or not a young person will turn to delinquency and – if they do – whether they will persist in criminal behavior over time. Also, juvenile justice agencies have consistently found that young people arrested at an early age are far more likely than other youth to become chronic juvenile offenders. Together, these findings make it possible for juvenile courts and juvenile justice agencies to identify early those youth who are at extreme risk for serious delinquency – and then to develop intensive programming targeting these highest-risk youth.

However, the reality throughout our nation is that few local juvenile justice systems take the time to assess objectively the risk of re-offending for first-time youthful offenders – even for second- or third- or seventh-time offenders – provided they have not yet committed a crime serious enough to spark the attention of a juvenile court prosecutor, judge or probation officer. The result, writes the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, is an "all-too-common pattern: several encounters with authorities; short-term detentions with no coherent, intensive interventions; repeated offenses; and eventual incarceration in juvenile and adult correctional facilities."[27]

In recent years, a handful of jurisdictions have begun to break that pattern. Beginning with Orange County, CA, these trailblazers are showing that chronic criminal careers can be nipped in the bud.

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NIPPING CRIMINAL CAREERS IN THE BUD
THE *8 PERCENT SOLUTION,* ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

As research director for the Orange County, California Probation Department in the late 1980s, Gwen Kurz began studying the county's young offender population. The good news, she found, was that 70 percent of Orange County youth referred to juvenile court never returned, and another 22 percent came back only once or twice within three years. However, there was a small group – 8 percent of all offenders ever referred to juvenile court – who appeared four or more times within three years. These chronic offenders committed more than half of all repeat juvenile crimes. They reappeared in juvenile or adult court an average of eight times in the six years following their initial referral to juvenile court, and nearly all committed at least one very serious and/or violent crime. The chronic offenders were incarcerated an average of 20 months over the three years at a cost of $44,000 each.[28]

Kurz and her boss, Michael Schumacher, then began looking for traits that would predict these chronic offenders at the first offense. They found that the youth most likely to became chronic delinquents differed from other juvenile offenders in two ways. First, those arrested at a young age (before 16) were far more likely than other youth offenders to become chronic delinquents. Second, youth who exhibited multiple problems – family discord, school failure, substance abuse, and/or pre-delinquent behavior – were at highest risk for recurring lawbreaking.

Based on this research, Orange County developed an intensive intervention program for youth meeting the "8 percent" profile. Specifically, the county created an objective assessment instrument to determine which young people referred to juvenile court on delinquency charges were: a) first-time offenders; b) 15 or younger; and c) suffering three or more risk factors. The county then placed youth who met these criteria into an all-day program operating five days per week. The county monitored the success of the likely chronic offenders and found that only 49 percent suffered subsequent adjudications in the 12 months after enrollment, barely half the historic re-arrest rate (93 percent) for youth with the same profile.[29]

Based on this initial success, Orange County has expanded the program to serve 350 youth county-wide, and it is utilizing a rigorous evaluation design to compare the outcomes for extreme-risk youth enrolled in the program with outcomes for youth with equivalent profiles who are randomly assigned to conventional juvenile court services and sanctions. Preliminary results are highly favorable, making Orange County's "8 Percent Solution" one of the most promising models in our nation's evolving efforts to bring adolescent crime under control.

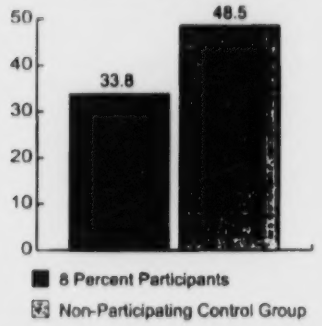
IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL "8 PERCENT YOUTH"

As part of its strategic planning efforts preparing to enter the 1990s, the Orange County Probation Department analyzed two cohorts of more than 3,000 youthful offenders – one comprised of youth who entered the county's juvenile justice system for the first time during the first half of 1985, the other entering during the first half of 1987. After determining that only a small number (i.e., 8 percent) were chronic offenders, Kurz and Schumacher pored over the data to identify characteristics that would identify these potential chronic offenders early.

"There will never be enough money, people, or programs to solve all the problems faced by each youth in our society. In the fight against juvenile crime, we must focus our efforts on the group with the greatest potential to burden and victimize society and the ones most likely to fail in life. This group cries out for our attention."

"8 PERCENT SOLUTION" PROGRAM, ORANGE COUNTY, CA IMPACT ON MULTIPLE RE-OFFENDING*

Percentage Arrested Two or More Times After Program Entry



* Analysis based on juveniles who had reached their 12-month post-assignment date as of June 30, 2000.

Source: Data provided via e-mail by Ms. Shirley Hunt, Orange County Probation Department, December 2000.

One factor jumped out right away: *age*. The data revealed that 57 percent of all chronic offenders were 15 or younger when they were first adjudicated. Moreover, youth first adjudicated at age 15 or younger were four times as likely (32 percent) to become chronic offenders as youth first adjudicated at ages 16 or above (8 percent).

Finding additional factors proved more complex, because (other than age) no single problem or characteristic could be found in all or most chronic offenders. However, the data did show that ***future chronic offenders displayed an unusually wide range of difficulties during their initial screening interviews.*** Based on this finding, the county crafted a "Multi-Problem Factor" to identify problems in four domains:

- **School performance/behavior,** including attendance problems (truancy or frequent absenteeism); behavior problems (recent suspensions or expulsions); and/or academic failure (failing grades).

- **Family problem factor,** including poor parental supervision/control (parent[s] unaware of where child goes, with whom, etc., and report little influence over these matters); significant family problems (illness, substance abuse, trauma, financial crisis, etc.); criminal family members exerting influence on the youth; and/or documented child abuse or neglect, or other family violence.

- **Substance abuse factor,** including any use beyond experimentation.

- **Delinquency factor,** including pattern of stealing, pattern of running away from home, and/or gang membership or affiliation.

Remarkably, among youth suffering with problems in three or more of these domains who were referred to juvenile court before age 16, 93 percent became chronic offenders.

THE "8 PERCENT" PROGRAM MODEL

Once Orange County had developed the screening tools to identify likely chronic offenders in their initial contact with the juvenile court, the next challenge was to design an intervention program that would effectively steer these youth away from delinquency.

County staff scoured the research literature regarding what works with juvenile offenders and other troubled adolescents. Then they decided upon a multi-pronged approach centered around a new "Youth and Family Resource Center." Core elements of the approach include:

- **All-day academic and youth development programming.** All youth are picked up at or near their homes every morning and delivered to one of five Youth and Family Resource Centers operated by the county Probation Department. Once there, participants spend most of the morning receiving academic instruction from county board of education teachers. In the afternoons, students typically participate in recreation, study hall, community service projects or life skills workshops.

John, Rudy, and the Case for Early Intervention

"They both run from a liquor store with six-packs of beer, only to fall into the waiting arms of store security staff. Both are ordered by the court to pick up trash for 10 weekends as their punishment. So long as this is done, their relationship with juvenile court concludes until the next offense, if there is one.

"Rudy is a potential 8 percenter, whereas John is not. John's family is outraged at his behavior and takes appropriate steps to deal with it, restricting him to home for weeks and taking away television privileges. John is embarrassed by the whole episode and never again steps over the line of criminal behavior.

"Rudy's problems are much larger than stealing a six-pack of beer. The weekend trash duty will not turn him around. He ditches school, abuses drugs, and hangs around with other kids who do the same. His parents have little or no impact on his life, so there is no 'righting of the ship' after his first brush with the law.

"The juvenile justice system may not pay much attention to Rudy until crime number three or four, unless he seriously victimizes someone. By then, however, bad habits will have been formed. It is often much too late."

Excerpt from The 8% Solution: Preventing Serious, Repeat Juvenile Crime *(Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), by Michael Schumacher and Gwen Kurz.*

- **Family involvement and counseling.** In addition to teachers, each Youth and Family Resource Center (serving 30-60 youth) is staffed with two therapists trained in both individual and family counseling, two in-home counselors from a private counseling agency, a county drug/alcohol specialist who counsels both youth and their parents, a nurse practitioner who helps the entire family secure needed medical care, and 4.5 full-time staff from a community-based agency providing parent education, teen parenting training, and community service programming for youth and their families.

- **Focus on substance abuse.** Because roughly two-thirds of Orange County's "8 Percent" youth abuse drugs and/or alcohol, the program offers every participant at least one hour of substance abuse education or counseling every week. Youth known to regularly abuse substances or come from families where substance abuse is problematic receive more in-depth treatment, as well as drug testing and home inspections from county probation staff.

MEASURING SUCCESS – THE "8 PERCENT" DIVIDEND

Since 1997, Orange County has been participating in a rigorous evaluation of its intervention program for potential chronic offenders. After completing a screening interview to determine whether first time offenders meet the criteria for participation in the program – i.e., below 16 with three or more problem areas – the county randomly assigned some youth to the program and others to a control group receiving normal court services and sanctions. Initial results from this evaluation indicate that the program is significantly reducing the offending behavior of extreme-risk youth.

Among the 71 youth who completed the program by June 30, 1999, 33.8 percent committed two or more offenses in the 12 months after program entry.

By contrast, 48.5 percent of control group youth not placed into the program committed two or more offenses during the 12-month period. (See Table #4.) In addition, participating youth have had fewer new court petitions, fewer arrest warrants, and spent fewer days in custody than control group youth in the first 12 months.[30] The "8 Percent" intervention program is also proving cost-effective. With a cost of $14,000 per individual per year, the intervention is substantially reducing future costs for incarceration as well as damages suffered by would-be victims of future crimes.

Based on the success of Orange County's preliminary efforts, the California legislature has funded a Repeat Offender Prevention Project since 1996 to continue the program in Orange County and to replicate and test the early intervention concept in seven other jurisdictions statewide. These programs, too, include a rigorous, control-group evaluation design, and results of these programs also find that youth enrolled in targeted, intensive early intervention services are committing substantially fewer felony crimes than youth assigned to control groups. Participating youth are also failing drug tests far less often, and they are earning significantly more school credits and higher grades than non-participating youth.[31]

Though the early intervention concept is still alien to juvenile justice agencies in most jurisdictions nationwide, a handful of states and communities are beginning to study and replicate this promising approach. As Kurz and Schumacher explain, the logic behind the strategy is obvious: "There will never be enough money, people, or programs to solve all the problems faced by each youth in our society. In the fight against juvenile crime, we must focus our efforts on the group with the greatest potential to burden and victimize society and the ones most likely to fail in life. This group cries out for our attention."[32]

Operating Agency	Orange County Probation Department
Program Type	County-Run Delinquency Intervention Program
Program Goals	Reduce Chronic Offending by High Risk Youth
Target Group	Juvenile offenders 15 and younger who demonstrate high risk for chronic delinquency
Key Strategies	Screening first-time juvenile offenders to identify those at extreme risk chronic delinquency, intensive day treatment for potential chronic offenders
Primary Funding Source(s)	Orange County, California Board of Corrections
Evidence of Effectiveness	Participants demonstrate significantly lower arrest rates than similar youth receiving conventional probation services
Contact Information	Jeff Corp, Director of Community Programs Orange County Probation Department 160 W. Cerritos Ave., Building #4 Anaheim, CA 98205 Phone: (714) 687-6703; Fax: (714) 533-6884

CHALLENGE #5:

PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO YOUTH (AND CHILDREN) WITH BEHAVIORAL DISTURBANCES

"Research and experience demonstrate that the services available in the juvenile justice system to alleviate [mental health] problems are entirely inadequate."[33]

Shay Bilchik, former Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
U.S. Department of Justice

Young people who commit juvenile offenses and become entangled in the juvenile justice system suffer disproportionately from emotional disturbances and mental illness.

By some estimates, up to 90 percent of young people referred to juvenile courts for delinquency exhibit the general symptoms of "conduct disorder" or "oppositional defiance disorder." The majority suffer with problems of substance abuse or dependency. Roughly one-third suffer with attention deficit (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorder are also disturbingly commonplace. Though estimates differ, the majority of studies on the mental health needs of juvenile offenders find that at least 20 percent suffer ***severe*** mental health disorders.[34]

"In the past, admission to [residential treatment centers] has been justified on the basis of community protection, child protection, and benefits of residential treatment per se. However, none of these justifications have stood up to research scrutiny. In particular, youth who display seriously violent and aggressive behavior do not appear to improve in such settings."

Dr. David Satcher, U.S. Surgeon General

Despite the direct connection between delinquency and mental health, however, our nation's efforts to meet the mental health needs of adolescents are seriously inadequate. The problems are three-fold:

- **Overreliance on Out-of-Home Treatment.** One-half of all the money spent in the United States for mental health treatment of children and youth pays for inpatient hospitalization. Another 25 percent pays for residential care for troubled youth in treatment centers and group homes costing hundreds of dollars per day.[35] Even with their high costs, however, hospitalization and other out-of-home treatments have not proven effective in resolving the mental health problems of youth. In 1999, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher concluded that "Inpatient [hospital] care is the clinical intervention with the weakest research support." Satcher also complained that: "In the past, admission to [residential treatment centers] has been justified on the basis of community protection, child protection, and benefits of residential treatment per se. However, none of these justifications have stood up to research scrutiny. In particular, youth who display seriously violent and aggressive behavior do not appear to improve in such settings."[36] In a six-state study of children treated in publicly-funded residential treatment centers, 75 percent were either readmitted to a mental health facility (about 45 percent) or incarcerated in a correctional setting (about 30 percent) within seven years.[37]

- **Underinvestment in High-Quality Community-Based Services.** The inevitable result of America's overreliance on expensive and ineffective out-of-home treatment has been lack of investment in non-residential services for disturbed children and adolescents. This oversight is particularly tragic given the striking success achieved by a handful of home-based and family-focused mental health treatment models. For instance, Multisystemic Therapy (see Challenge #3) has dramatically improved the outcomes for youth who are hospitalized for emotionally disturbances. Likewise, so-called "wraparound services" (see below) – offering customized and comprehensive support and treatment services for youth in their own homes – have also shown potential to improve outcomes for troubled youth while decreasing costs for taxpayers. However, rather than providing these or other intensive community-based service strategies, most communities offer only a hodge-podge of fragmented and outdated adolescent mental health services.

- **Lack of Coordination Between Concerned Agencies.** Typically, youth troubled with emotional disturbances, developmental disabilities, or other mental health problems come in contact with multiple public agencies: department of mental health, child protective services, special education, juvenile justice, and others. However, these agencies rarely coordinate their services for youth whose cases they share in common. As a result, treatment and support efforts often work at cross purposes – leaving youth and their families confused, distrustful and ultimately unsuccessful in controlling behavior, preventing delinquency, and averting expensive placements into psychiatric hospitals, treatment centers, and juvenile corrections facilities.

WRAPAROUND MILWAUKEE
SYSTEMS REFORM IN A LARGE JURISDICTION

In the early 1990s, the leaders of Milwaukee County's mental health division had a problem. The county was spending $18 million each year to buy care for emotionally disturbed young people in group homes and residential treatment programs. And it wasn't working.

These youth were clearly troubled and needing services. The majority had been arrested for delinquent crimes. Many were a danger to themselves and others – and the rest were at serious risk to become a danger. However, like many jurisdictions nationwide, Milwaukee County offered emotionally disturbed youth only an expensive, one-size-fits-all response: out-of-home placement. The county was largely ignoring the homes and families from which troubled children came – and to which they would return – and it was not working with families to overcome brewing problems before they reached crisis proportions. Moreover, even youth placed into $135 per day treatment programs often failed to stabilize their behavior or avoid relapses when they returned home after completing the treatment.

Milwaukee County began experimenting with other treatment options in 1989, after receiving an initial foundation grant. In 1994 it secured a $15 million, 5-year federal grant to build an entirely new adolescent mental treatment system, Wraparound Milwaukee. The county's plan was predicated on three elements: 1) developing the capacity to offer intensive, comprehensive assistance to troubled youth and their families in their own homes; 2) pooling funds

"The hospital and the residential treatment center have a place in the care of emotionally disturbed youth, but they should be a stabilizing place, not a place for change. You can't use the hospital to try and reform or restructure their personalities. That needs to happen in a more normalized environment that's a true reflection of their day to day life."

and coordinating efforts from the various agencies working with emotionally troubled youth; and 3) sharply reducing the reliance on out-of-home care by avoiding placements whenever possible and by limiting lengths of stay for youth who are placed in residential care.

Given the high costs of residential treatment and the limited evidence of its effectiveness, as well as the growing promise of wraparound and other home-based treatment strategies for troubled youth, these might seem like common sense solutions. In reality, however, they are anything but commonplace. By putting these reforms into practice – pooling $28 million per year from county agencies and Medicaid reimbursements to fund the Wraparound program, dramatically reducing delinquency and emotional distress for 600-700 youth per year while keeping these youth at home with their families – Milwaukee County has made itself a model for the entire nation.

UNDERSTANDING THE "WRAPAROUND" APPROACH

The "Wraparound" philosophy was initially developed in Canada during the 1970s, and it was transported to the United States during the 1980s by innovators in Alaska, Chicago, and Vermont. The concept revolves around five fundamental principles:

- **Address problems in youths' natural environment** – i.e., home – rather than an artificial environment, where lessons learned will be difficult to translate when youth return home.

- **Work with and listen to the whole family, especially parents.** Evidence increasingly finds that the family system is both the most important determinant of behavior problems and the most important ally for therapists in reversing negative behavior patterns. Unlike most mental health modalities, where the professional is the "expert" and the individual and/or family has the problems, wraparound is based on the belief that families know best what they need. Thus, the job of professionals is to help families achieve their own goals and build the skills to sustain success.

- **Individualize services based on the needs of each youth and family,** rather than employing the one-size-fits-all approach typical in residential treatment programs. This notion of "wrapping" needed services "around" each individual young person lies at core of the wraparound concept.

- **Focus on strengths.** Even the most troubled adolescents and families have hidden aptitudes, interests, and desires. Tapping these strengths and building families' capacity to anticipate and solve problems can be critical to avoiding crises in the future.

- **Build a support system.** Most youth have relatives, family friends, or other interested adults who care about them and are willing to provide guidance and support. Recruiting support from these natural allies – to be mentors, or provide a respite for beleaguered parents – can be an invaluable step in creating a stable environment for young people.

WRAPAROUND – *MILWAUKEE-STYLE*

Milwaukee County has built a unique system for applying wraparound principles to local needs. Wraparound Milwaukee targets services only to emotionally disturbed youth who are either in residential treatment or face imminent risk of placement. Though youth can be referred to the program by local child welfare officials as well as the local probation agency, most (70 percent) have a history of delinquency and many are on probation at the time of their referral to the Wraparound Milwaukee program.

Wraparound Milwaukee's program involves four key components:

- **Care Coordinators** – The county's Wraparound office contracts with eight local nonprofit agencies to hire, train, and supervise care coordinators, who serve as the cornerstone of the wraparound process. Though they are not trained therapists or social workers, these coordinators are college graduates who receive extensive pre-service and in-service

training in the wraparound model. Working with a caseload of up to eight youth, the coordinators: a) conduct in-depth assessments of each youth and family to identify strengths and needs; b) assemble a "child and family team" (see below) including family members, counselors, and other adults committed to helping the young person succeed; c) facilitate development of a plan of care by the child and family team; d) identify providers to offer needed services; and e) monitor the delivery of services and the overall progress of the young person.

- **Child and Family Teams** – The actual plan for each young person's wraparound care is developed by a "Child and Family Team" – a collection of all the adults involved in supporting the family to care for the young person. These include family members, natural supporters (i.e., relatives, church members, and friends), and professionals such as probation officers, child welfare workers, and mental health professionals. Convened by the care coordinator on at least a monthly basis, the teams are responsible to create and periodically revise the plan of care for each young person.

- **Service Provider Network** – To help care coordinators find qualified providers to meet the identified needs of troubled youth, Wraparound Milwaukee has enrolled more than 170 community agencies to provide any of 60 services – everything from tutoring and after school programming to substance abuse treatment to transportation. To hold down costs, Wraparound Milwaukee has set a standard rate for each service, using its bargaining power as a large consumer of services to press providers to accept below-market rates.

- **Mobile Crisis Team** – In addition to their care coordinator and child and family team, each youth and family enrolled in Wraparound Milwaukee also has access to a Mobile Urgent Treatment Team – a 24-hour-per-day service continuously on call to intervene in family crises that might otherwise result in rapid placement into out-of-home care. Through this mobile team, and through the crisis safety plans created for every young person in the program, Wraparound Milwaukee brings urgent situations under control without removing participants from their homes and unraveling progress made to date.

BLENDED FUNDING AND "CAPITATED RATE" FINANCING

Before Milwaukee launched the wraparound program, the county paid for more than 360 young people per night to sleep in residential treatment facilities, and it maintained a waiting list of youth approved for residential treatment and awaiting placement. Placements into residential treatment were made by a variety of county agencies – child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health – and each agency paid the bills for any young person it referred. The average length of stay in residential treatment was 14 months, at a daily cost of $135 per day per youth. That resulted in an overall cost of $18 million per year – or $60,000 for each young person.

Wraparound Milwaukee replaced this funding hodge-podge with a unified system. It collected the funds previously spent for out-of-home care by the county's child welfare ($8 million/year), juvenile justice ($8 million/year), and mental health ($1.5 million/year) agencies, and used these funds to support a continuum of services including both wraparound and residential care. Wraparound Milwaukee also captures additional funds ($10 million per year) in Medicaid reimbursements for eligible youth, creating a total budget of $28 million in 1999.

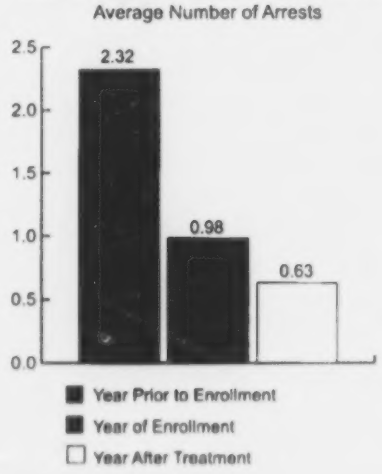
To ensure that the project minimizes unnecessary out-of-home care, Wraparound Milwaukee is paid on a "capitated rate" basis similar to that used by health maintenance organizations. Wraparound Milwaukee receives $3,300 per month per child for every juvenile justice and child welfare case referred to the program, plus $1,542 per month for each young person on Medicaid. Wraparound Milwaukee pools all of these funds and pays for all services needed by each youth participant, regardless of cost. Nonetheless, the fixed-rate funding formula ensures that the program maintains its focus on cost-effectiveness and avoids unnecessary out-of-home placements.

MINIMIZING OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

The use of wraparound services and the capitated rate financing system have both helped limit the number of young people placed into expensive residential treatment. In addition, the county also took two additional steps to limit the use of residential placements:

- **Limiting commitment periods.** Prior to wraparound, most youth placed into residential treatment (either by child welfare agencies or probation) were sent on court orders with a one-year duration. Only through a new court order could youth be released from the facility before the year was up. Today, most youth ordered into residential treatment are placed in the custody of Wraparound Milwaukee, and the initial term of treatment is usually just 90 days. The case are reviewed regularly and each young person is discharged (to begin home-based wraparound care) at the earliest possible date. ***Through this system, Wraparound Milwaukee has reduced the average length of stay in residential treatment from 14 months to just 3.5 months.***

WRAPAROUND MILWAUKEE: IMPACT ON OFFENDING RATES OF DELINQUENT YOUTH PARTICIPANTS*



* Data through October 31, 2000

Source: Milwaukee County Mental Health Division

- **County-wide crisis intervention.** Whereas most services provided by Wraparound Milwaukee are limited only to youth formally enrolled as wraparound participants, the project makes one service available to any young person in the county anytime: the Mobile Urgent Treatment Team. Historically, many young people have been placed into long-term residential treatment programs after a crisis erupts – a suicide attempt, perhaps, or an assault on a family member. The mobile team helps youth and families weather such crises without triggering a long-term residential placement. The mobile team reviews all requests for inpatient psychiatric admissions for adolescents countywide, and it offers services to help defuse crises: group homes providing short-term (up to 14 days) housing, plus treatment teams made up of psychologists and social workers who offer up to 30 days of emergency case management and family preservation assistance.

WRAPAROUND SUCCESS

When it was first establishing its wraparound program in the mid-90s, Milwaukee County conducted a pilot project targeting 25 young people who were then in residential treatment programs and had no date for release. Using Wraparound, the county enabled 17 of the 25 to return home within 90 days – thereby reducing the average three-month cost from over $5,000 per young person to $2,700. Eventually, 24 of the young people left residential treatment facilities and returned to the community: 17 were reunited with their families, and seven entered foster homes.

By 2000, Wraparound Milwaukee was proving that such success was possible on a broad scale. ***Countywide, the program has reduced the daily population in residential treatment programs from 360 (plus wait list) down to 135 per day. In addition, psychiatric hospitalization of adolescents has declined by 80 percent since Wraparound Milwaukee went into effect.***

Even more impressive have been the substantial behavior improvements and reductions in delinquency displayed by Wraparound participants. Among 169 delinquent youth for whom one year follow-up data were available in October 2000, the average number of arrests per participant declined from 2.32 arrests during the year prior to enrollment in Wraparound Milwaukee, to .98 arrests per participant during the year of enrollment, to .63 arrests per participant in the year following treatment. (See Table p.37.) Whereas 57 percent of participants committed two or more offenses during the year prior to enrollment, only 15 percent committed two or more offenses in the year following treatment – a reduction of 74 percent.

Likewise, Wraparound Milwaukee participants have also significantly improved their clinical outcomes: measures such as the Child Behavior Check List and the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale show significant improvement in emotional functioning and stability.

"The hospital and the residential treatment center have a place in the care of emotionally disturbed youth, but they should be a stabilizing place, not a place for change," explains Dr. Chris Morano, who heads Wraparound Milwaukee's Mobile Urgent Treatment Teams. "You can't use the hospital to try and reform or restructure their personalities. That needs to happen in a more normalized environment that's a true reflection of their day to day life."

Operating Agency	Milwaukee County Mental Health Division, Child & Adolescent Services Branch
Program Type	County-run System of Care for Emotionally Disturbed Youth
Program Goals	Providing Effective Treatment and Reducing Out-of-Home Care for Emotionally Disturbed and Delinquent Youth
Target Group	Emotionally disturbed adolescents (including many delinquents) at risk for immediate placement into a residential treatment program
Key Strategies	Comprehensive home-based services; strength-based treatment; partnership with families and other caring adults; crisis intervention to prevent residential placements; capitated-rate funding to discourage unnecessary or lengthy out-of-home placements.
Primary Funding Source(s)	Pooled funding from child-serving agencies (probation, child welfare, mental health), Medicaid, as well as federal grant funding (expired in 1999).
Evidence of Effectiveness	Dramatic reductions in out-of-home placements for youth county-wide; sharp reductions in offending by delinquent participants; substantial gains in behavioral functioning
Contact Information	Bruce Kamradt, Director Children's Mental Health Branch Milwaukee County Division of Mental Health 9501 Watertown Plank Road Wauwatosa, WI 53226 Phone: (414) 257-7611; Fax: (414) 257-7575

CHALLENGE #6:

OFFER QUALITY TREATMENT AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR INCARCERATED YOUTH

"The majority of delinquents, even those who have committed serious crimes, will be released back into their communities [while they are still] in their teens and twenties.... Without an education, without health care, without practical skills, without transition steps back into their communities, without programs that have turned their antisocial activity into meaningful life lessons, what chance do they have of becoming productive, law abiding citizens? What chance does our society have of being safe?"[38]

Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Every day in America, about 105,000 young people are held in custody. They include 27,600 awaiting trial or pending placement, and 76,500 who have been found delinquent and committed to correctional facilities. Most of the youth offenders committed to a residential placement are housed in state-funded "training schools" – large, congregate care facilities that often mirror adult prisons both in physical environment and correctional philosophy.

Nationwide, only one-fourth of young people confined in training schools have been convicted of (or "adjudicated" for) violent felonies, and many have committed only status offenses, drug possession, disorderly conduct, or other less serious crimes. Thus, many or most could be safely and more effectively sanctioned in community-based correctional programs. Indeed, the success of Missouri's Division of Youth Services (see Challenge #1) proves that many youth now committed to state care could be safely supervised in the community – and that community-based correctional programs can produce recidivism rates far below those typically achieved by training schools.

However, in Missouri and every other state, there remain youthful offenders who have committed crimes so heinous or suffer behavioral problems so severe and potentially dangerous that secure (i.e., locked) residential placement is the only safe option. Simply locking up these youth does not guarantee public safety, however. Because most youth will return to the community within 12-18 months (and almost all will return by their early twenties), the quality of the corrections program is critically important.

Unfortunately, the quality of juvenile corrections facilities nationwide is highly uneven. Several problems are commonplace:

- **Substandard conditions of confinement.** In 1993, the U.S. Justice Department released a comprehensive study finding that 62 percent of confined youth were held in overcrowded facilities, which suffer higher rates of violence against both staff and other youth than non-crowded facilities.[39] Also, physical abuse by juvenile corrections staff has been documented in several states. Overall, 37 successful lawsuits have been filed on behalf of juvenile offenders in 25 states in the past three decades regarding both overcrowding and abuse issues, and the problems show no sign of abating.[40]

- **Inadequate programming.** Though required to provide educational services to all youth 16 and younger, many training schools offer educational activities for only a few hours per day. These educational activities often lack academic rigor, and they seldom include quality special education services for youth with learning disabilities (as required by law). Inadequate mental health screening and treatment are also pervasive in juvenile

corrections facilities, despite the high rates of mental, emotional and substance abuse problems plaguing juvenile inmate populations.

- **Undertrained staff.** Day-to-day supervision of juvenile offenders in most training schools is provided by low-paid workers without college education or in-depth training in youth development. Thus, even if quality education and counseling services are provided for a few hours each day, confined youth spend the bulk of their waking hours overseen by staff without the skills or motivation to maintain a positive, therapeutic environment.

- **Inadequate aftercare.** Perhaps the most self-defeating weakness in juvenile justice today is the lack of support and supervision for youth returning home from juvenile correctional institutions. By definition, these are the most dangerous and high-risk of all youth. Yet in most states and communities these young people are provided only modest supervision as they re-enter the community and few services to help them achieve success and remain crime-free.

"Research shows that subjecting youth to such harsh confinement conditions increases rates of violence and recidivism," concluded the American Bar Association in 1998. "In a society that already faces daily violence and crime, deficiencies in the care of incarcerated youth serve only to further threaten the well-being of our children, families, and communities."[41]

THE LAST CHANCE RANCH
TURNING AROUND FLORIDA'S TOUGHEST JUVENILE OFFENDERS

For more than twenty years, Florida's juvenile courts have been sending some of their most difficult and dangerous cases to a unique program in the Everglades, the Florida Environmental Institute. So too have Florida's criminal court judges, giving hard case adolescents a final opportunity in the juvenile justice system before sentencing them to adult prison.

Here's why: unlike virtually every other juvenile corrections facility in the nation, Florida Environmental Institute has a long track record of effectively rehabilitating serious and violent juvenile offenders. "This is a demonstration project that shows that when you look at sending these kinds of kids to prison, it doesn't make sense," says Frank Orlando, for 21 years a judge in Broward County, Florida and now Director of the Center for the Study of Youth Policy at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale. "We're talking about kids, most of whom have a much more serious background than the majority of kids being transferred to adult courts today. But the recidivism rates are very low. Public safety is enhanced."[42]

UP FROM THE SEA: THE EVOLUTION OF A JUVENILE JUSTICE MODEL

The roots of the Florida Environmental Institute date back to 1969, when Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton launched a new oceanographic research institute. That same year, the Institute's director accepted several troubled boys to work on the Institute's research projects. Quickly, institute leaders saw that the marine research activities had a powerfully positive effect on participating youth. Over time, they devoted more and more of the Institute's efforts to redirecting the lives of troubled youth, rather than research.

The initial program for juvenile offenders in Boca Raton was replicated in Tampa and St. Petersburg in 1972, then in three more sites by 1974. Each program was (and still is) run by an autonomous, non-profit corporation with a local board of directors. However, an umbrella organization, Associated Marine Institutes (AMI), was created in 1974 to provide the local programs with management and administrative support.

"We have no lock-up room at FEI and we don't teach our staff to 'take kids down' by wrestling them to the ground and pinning them. We are convinced that the more unusual you treat a kid, the more unusual he will act."

AMI President, Robert Weaver.

Today, the AMI network includes 51 institutes in seven states and the Cayman Islands. Thirty of these are non-residential day programs, like the initial marine project in Boca Raton. The remaining 21 are residential juvenile corrections centers, including seven in Florida. Among them, the oldest and most successful is Florida Environmental Institute.

A RANCH FOR FLORIDA'S TOUGHEST JUVENILES

Located at Fish Eating Creek in the township of Venus, 40 miles northwest of Lake Okeechobee, the Florida Environmental Institute (FEI) is surrounded by miles of open, humid, alligator-and mosquito-infested swamp and forest. When delinquent youths first started arriving in 1982, they slept in tents. There was no choice: no buildings yet stood on the 40-acre site. Since then, participants and staff have erected several structures – including two dormitories, general education and vocational classrooms, a tool shed, a barn, and a dining hall. They have also turned the property into a working ranch, raising cattle and pigs, tending horses, and growing corn, peas, cucumbers, and other crops.

FEI earned its "Last Chance Ranch" nickname in the 1980s, soon after opening. The label was coined by the participants themselves, all of whom were sent to FEI on serious felony charges. Though all were 17 or younger when committing their offenses, many of the youth had been transferred to adult criminal courts. Local judges sent them to the FEI juvenile program as a final opportunity – a last chance – before a sentence to adult prison. A study in the 1980s reported that FEI youths had been charged with an average of 18 delinquent offenses each, including 11.5 felonies. In 1997-98, the average youth released from FEI had accumulated a remarkable 32.7 charges, including 11.8 felony charges, the highest felony rate among the 35 Florida programs serving serious juvenile offenders and the second highest rate of total offenses.[43]

A UNIQUE ATMOSPHERE

Despite the serious profile of juvenile offenders sent to FEI, the facility has never used iron bars, handcuffs, or locked cells. The nearest state road is 15 miles away – and the nearest town is another 20 miles beyond that. Thus, despite the lack of correctional hardware, escape is virtually impossible. (FEI's most recent escape attempt came in 1998, unlike Florida's "secure" juvenile corrections facilities which suffer several escapes every year.) The lack of bars and physical restraints has long been a core element of the Associated Marine Institute philosophy – and it provided the rationale for AMI's decision to locate the facility in the remote Everglades.

According to Frank Orlando, who helped found the initial program in Boca Raton and still sits on AMI's board of trustees, "If the program was in the community, it would have to be hardware secure. This way, the kids don't get the feeling that they are being caged like animals."

"We have no lock-up room at FEI and we don't teach our staff to 'take kids down' by wrestling them to the ground and pinning them," explains AMI President Robert Weaver. "We are convinced that the more unusual you treat a kid, the more unusual he will act."[44]

Orlando also points to FEI's unusually small population as a key to its success. The ranch has capacity only for 22 participants at a time, compared with the 100-400 youth capacity of Florida's prison-like "youth development centers." According to Orlando, "The small population at Last Chance Ranch gives the program the opportunity to carry out its mission, which is to address the kids' problems and change their behavior."

REWARDS, PUNISHMENTS, AND HARD WORK

When a young man is referred to the Ranch, his ride to the program ends on the side of the road two miles from the main facility. He is met there by the program's director and another counselor. Freed from handcuffs, leg irons, and any other restraints, he then hikes through the swamp and palmetto forest as staff begin explaining to him the programs rules, philosophy and expectations. The hike ends at "O Camp," just outside the main FEI campus, where the offender will talk with staff and senior participants and begin the physical work (grass cutting, weeding, etc.) that will be a steady part of his days at FEI. At O Camp, new participants must agree to abide by the many rules that govern life at the Ranch, and they begin to bond with staff and peers. If all goes well in O Camp, the new participant will join the rest of the FEI population for the evening meal on the third day. If the participants resists or acts out, the process may extend one or two additional days.

Phase One. Upon entering the main FEI campus, participants begin the first of the three stages in the FEI rehabilitation process. In Phase One, which lasts six months or longer, youth sleep in an austere dorm with a hard floor, bunk beds, plywood walls, screened windows without glass, and no television or other amenities. Despite the steamy climate, the Phase One dorm has no air conditioning, although ceiling fans are provided to circulate the hot air.

The participants' days are consumed with two kinds of work: 1) individualized academic education, where they make progress toward a high school diploma or GED; and 2) physical labor tending farm animals, caring for crops, digging up tree stumps to clear land, cleaning and maintaining ranch facilities, making repairs and improvements to the ranch buildings (and sometimes building new ones), and more.

"The small population at Last Chance Ranch gives the program the opportunity to carry out its mission, which is to address the kids' problems and change their behavior."

However, youths' primary task at FEI is to earn credit toward going home. FEI, like all of the Associated Marine Institute programs, is operated on a strict behavior management regimen. Participants are ranked five times per day on seven areas of behavior: being on time, appearance, attitude, leadership, participation, enthusiasm, and manners. In the short-term, these rankings determine the order in which participants are seated in the cafeteria, and who is first to receive a second portion. The primary importance of the weekly rankings, however, is long-term: FEI youth are released from the program only after they have earned enough "point cards" to progress through all of the required levels. Each participant earns between half and one-and-a-half point cards per week, and each must earn 12 cards to complete each of FEI's six levels. While fighting, rule breaking and disobeying instructions do not land young people in physical restraints or solitary confinement, as in a typical youth corrections facility, they do set back the youth's progress toward going home, and often lead to an extra helping of tough physical chores.

"Their behavior and their attitude determines their whole length of stay," says FEI director, Mike Shumans. "If they're not doing well and they don't earn the point cards they need to progress, then they can be here a long time. If they follow the rules and do well, they can get out in a year. It's basically up to them."

Phase Two. In Phase One, participants must progress from the "Tenderfoot" level to the "Ranch Hand" level and finally to the "Buckaroo" level. Once they complete this third level, youth shift into Phase Two, which begins with a move into a more comfortable, air-conditioned dormitory with a television, more comfortable furnishings, and bit of private space. Participants continue their academic and ranch work during this phase, and they also take part in occasional community service and environmental projects. Toward the end of Phase Two, which also lasts six months or longer,

students earn the right to go back to their home towns with an FEI staff member and begin finding work, rebuilding family relationships, and making living arrangements (if there is no safe and healthy family home).

PHASE THREE – MAKING AFTERCARE A CENTERPIECE

Unlike many juvenile corrections programs, where the treatment largely stops when youth leave the facility, the FEI program has always included a heavy focus on the transition home. During the month prior to leaving the ranch, youth work closely with their counselors to develop plans for their return. Once home, youth receive five visits per week from an FEI community coordinator, plus frequent calls from the case manager on staff at the FEI campus.

Community coordinators monitor the progress of the young people – and can even return youth to the ranch if their behavior lapses. As at the ranch, however, the emphasis is more on supporting youth

The New Ferris School
Juvenile Corrections Reform in Delaware

Back in the early 1990s, Delaware's Ferris training school was a terrible place. Designed to house 47 youthful offenders, the facility typically held 80 or 90 – even 100. "The conditions were atrocious," said Judith Mellen, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union for Delaware. "The physical plant was not only in very poor repair, it was almost impossible to keep clean. Food was not adequate. Clothing was not adequate. Education was not adequate."[45]

The ACLU filed suit in 1990 to protest conditions at Ferris, but nobody in state government listened until Governor Thomas Carper was elected and settled the suit in 1993. Under a consent decree, Delaware razed the old Ferris School and spent $14 million to build a new 69,000 square-foot facility. Moreover, it adopted a new correctional philosophy. Today, all youth in Ferris School receive drug and alcohol education, anger management, conflict resolution, sex education and HIV prevention. As part of that new approach, all direct care workers at Ferris must now have a bachelor's degree in education or a behavioral science.

Perhaps the most impressive advance at the "New Ferris" has been the education program. Thanks to a unique partnership with the DuPont Company, almost every youth in the facility now has a mentor. DuPont provides financial support for the program and 78 volunteers – DuPont executives, chemists, engineers, and researchers — who meet weekly with youth and help them with their academic work. Since the new Ferris School opened in 1997 and the mentoring program began, students have averaged a remarkable increase of 2.5 grade levels during their six-nine month stays at Ferris.

"It may not be common practice for the American Civil Liberty Union to publicly laud state officials who have faced them in court and over the negotiating table," wrote Delaware ACLU Director, Judith Mellen in February 2000, "but Ferris' transformation is an uncommonly successful result of the initiative of state officials and the ACLU. The Delaware experience should serve as a model, not only for Ferris, but also for the cooperative process that went into achieving this result."[46]

CONTACT:

Dianne Gadow, Superintendent
The Ferris School
Delaware Youth & Family Center
956 Centre Road
Wilmington, DE 19805
(302) 993-3811

than threatening them. Coordinators get actively involved in helping youth to gain admission to schools or colleges or employment, assisting youths' families to secure needed services or benefits, and advocating for youth with schools or employers. The intensive support continues for six months before the youth finally graduates from the FEI program.

UNPARALLELED RESULTS

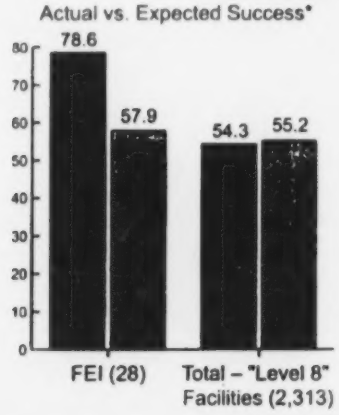
Each year, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice evaluates each of the more-than-100 juvenile corrections programs operating statewide. The Department calculates the success rates and costs per successful completion for each program, and it measures each program's success against an "expected success rate" that is based upon the specific demographic and offending profile of youths assigned to the program.

For the four-year period from 1997 through 2000, only nine of 57 (15.8 percent) serious juvenile offenders released from FEI were found guilty of a new offense in their first 12 months after completing the program. This compares to an average reconviction rate of more than 40 percent for all Florida institutions serving serious juvenile offenders. In 2000, only one FEI graduate out of 21 – just 4.6 percent – was found by a court to have committed a new offense.

The average cost for one youth to complete a term at FEI, $75,000, runs well above the rates ($30,000 - $50,000) in Florida's four prison-like juvenile corrections facilities for serious offenders. However, despite this disparity – which is due to FEI's high staff-to-participant ratio and the longer than average periods of confinement at FEI – the program also scores well in terms of cost-effectiveness. For the two-year period from July 1996 through June 1998 (in which FEI experienced a 21.6 percent reconviction rate), the program's average cost per successful completion ($58,120) was higher than two of Florida's four "youth centers" and lower than two others.

However, this figure does not include the costs of continued crime committed by youth after leaving these training schools. According to an analysis published by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice in September 2000, each time a juvenile offender reoffends following release from a commitment program, it costs the state $165,571 in criminal justice and victim costs.[47] Each of the larger programs suffers reconviction rates of 45-55 percent – more than twice the FEI rate. Had Last Chance Ranch graduates reoffended at the rates of the larger Florida

FLORIDA ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE VS. OTHER "LEVEL 8" JUVENILE CORRECTIONS FACILITIES IN FLORIDA:



* Data for juvenile offenders released from correctional facilities during fiscal years 1996-97 and 1997-98.

** Success is defined as no offenses within one year of release.

*** Expected success rates are calculated by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice based on characteristics of juvenile offenders placed into each facility.

Source: *Program Accountability Measures for DJJ Commitment Programs: A Two-Year Analysis, FY 1999-2000*, Management Report # 2000-9 (Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, March 2000), p. 12.

■ Actual Success Rate**

■ Expected Success Rate***

programs, at least 20 additional offenses would have been committed – at a sum cost of more than $3 million to victims and taxpayers. Clearly, FEI is not only more effective than traditional incarceration programs; it is also more cost-effective. Less cost, more safety.

Operating Agency	Associated Marine Institutes
Program Type	Privately-Run Residential Corrections Facility
Program Goals	Rehabilitation of Serious and Chronic Juvenile Offenders
Target Group	Serious and chronic juvenile offenders, including many who have been transferred to adult courts
Key Strategies	Remote location in the Florida Everglades; small scale (22 youth); no locked cells or restraints; high staff-to-offender ratio; intensive behavior management; extensive aftercare support
Primary Funding Source(s)	Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
Evidence of Effectiveness	20 year-record of extremely low recidivism; strong cost-effectiveness despite high cost-per-participant
Contact Information	Robert Weaver, President Associated Marine Institutes 5915 Benjamin Center Drive Tampa, FL 33634 Phone: (813) 887-3300; Fax: (813) 889-8092

CHALLENGE #7:

PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES THAT ENABLE YOUTH TO ASSUME PRODUCTIVE ROLES IN SOCIETY

"For too long, education has been regarded as just another service for incarcerated youth. For too long, yesterday's pedagogy has failed to educate delinquent youth for today's world. It is time to change."[48]
Robert Gemignani, National Office for Social Responsibility

Overwhelmingly, young people who become chronic delinquents and adult criminals suffer from two crippling problems: 1) weak academic achievement; and 2) poor preparation for the world of work.

If we want to hasten the pace at which delinquent youth mature into adulthood and terminate delinquent behavior patterns (as most eventually do), helping youth prepare for and enter the labor market is critical. That means education. That means job readiness. That means vocational skills. And for troubled youth long used to failure, many of whom suffer learning disabilities and behavioral disorders, each of these goals requires hands-on learning opportunities providing both a first taste of success and a clear path toward employment.

Nationwide, detailed information about the scope and quality of education and training programs for delinquent youth is virtually non-existent. The latest national survey of juvenile correctional education programs was completed in 1996 (using data from 1992), and it included little more than an incomplete checklist from 39 states. The report listed state budgets for juvenile correctional education, the agency responsible for administering correctional education programs, and simple yes-no lists of program types offered (elementary & secondary education, GED prep, vocational education, etc.). The report included few data regarding how many youth participate in these programs, and no data at all on participant outcomes.[49]

As one federally-funded study concluded, "No systematic and cumulative data exist to show what programs [youthful offenders] receive, from what kinds of staff, at what cost – let alone what results."[50]

Even without national data, however, it is clear that most juvenile justice systems remain substantially unprepared to provide delinquent youth with a quality education and prepare them for the labor market. According to the National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice: "Education programs in many juvenile correctional facilities are inadequate.... Juvenile correctional institutions often have limited capacity to support appropriate educational interventions for the youth confined to their care and custody. Major systemic impediments include overcrowding, insufficient financial resources, ineffective governance structures, isolation of correctional schools from education reform practices and from public schools, inadequate transition and aftercare services, and lack of collaboration and coordination with treatment and security components within the juvenile facility."[51]

Particularly serious in juvenile corrections is the lack of career preparation. The majority of youth who are removed from home and placed in juvenile corrections facilities never again return to school – and most never complete high school. "While correctional educators must find better ways to motivate students to return to school," writes

correctional education expert, Robert Gemignani, "they must also provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in entry-level jobs."[52]

"The relationship [between youth and correctional staff] and a sense of safety are the absolute, necessary fundamental things that have to be in place" in juvenile corrections," explains juvenile justice consultant, Paul DeMuro. "Once they are in place, you can step back and look at what causes the delinquency in the first place, and I think in most cases that is lack of opportunity. So if that's the cause, then skills enhancing is clearly an important part of the solution."

PREPARING DELINQUENT YOUTH FOR PRODUCTIVE CAREERS THE GULF COAST TRAINING CENTER

In New Waverly, Texas, a new neighborhood is sprouting up – eight houses purchased since 1998 by moderate income families at affordable prices, and five more on the drawing board. With wall-to-wall carpeting, modern kitchens and central heating, the homes look conventional in every respect. But in one way they are entirely unique: all were primarily built by delinquent juvenile offenders.

The development and construction of these homes has been spearheaded by the Gulf Coast Trades Center, a juvenile corrections program located in the Sam Houston National Forest outside of New Waverly, an hour's ride north of Houston. By teaching youthful offenders practical, hands-on vocational skills (in construction and several other career tracks) and providing opportunities to employ those skills in a real world context, Gulf Coast Trades Center stands virtually alone in our nation's juvenile justice infrastructure – a residential program for serious juvenile offenders that makes education and career preparation the cornerstone of its treatment and rehabilitation philosophy.

Not only for new homeowners, but also for the young people served and Texas citizens concerned about youth crime, the results of Gulf Coast's vocational approach are noteworthy: low recidivism and high rates of success for program graduates in finding well-paying employment in their chosen occupations.

Gulf Coast Trades Center stands virtually alone in our nation's juvenile justice infrastructure – a residential program for serious juvenile offenders that makes education and career preparation the cornerstone of its treatment and rehabilitation philosophy.

UNION ROOTS

Gulf Coast Trades Center came to life in 1971 on the grounds of an abandoned site of the federal Job Corps program. The Gulf Coast Trades Union, in partnership with city government in Houston, secured funding from the federal Model Cities program to continue using the site to train low-income youths. The new program struggled until former union organizer Mike Buzbee took over in 1974. Though Buzbee and five staff members went without pay for three months in these early days, Gulf Coast captured contracts with the Texas Youth Commission and the federal CETA job training program early in 1975 and began training delinquent teens for trades and careers.

A quarter century later, Buzbee remains in charge at Gulf Coast, and the agency retains its union-based focus on trades and careers. Gulf Coast provides academic and vocational training, work experience, counseling and aftercare for 176 delinquent youth each day. Sixty percent of these youth are referred from the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) – either as a step down from their initial stays in TYC training schools, a consequence for violating parole, or as a direct placement following adjudication. The remaining 40 percent are referred to Gulf Coast directly from county courts and probation agencies throughout Texas.

FRESH START at the Living Classrooms Foundation: An Old Trade Leads to New Success

Down on the waterfront in Baltimore's Fells Point neighborhood, once home to a thriving shipbuilding industry, 20 young men arrive each morning to learn that honored old trade. Five days per week for 40 weeks, they practice boatbuilding, carpentry and other hands-on skills. They also receive valuable job readiness training, advance academically, and learn self-discipline with the help of an innovative daily self-evaluation process. By the time they graduate from this **"Fresh Start"** program, most of the youth – all juvenile offenders ages 16 to 21 – are ready to succeed in employment and/or education. Even more importantly, unlike youth confined in Maryland's more conventional juvenile corrections programs, they are unlikely ever to be rearrested or reincarcerated.

"Fresh Start" was launched in 1989 by the Living Classrooms Foundation, a Baltimore-based nonprofit dedicated to youth development through hands-on learning. Funded primarily by the Maryland Department of Juvenile Justice, the program serves 20 youth at a time in a curriculum with five eight-week modules. All participants are referred by a probation officer or a juvenile court judge. More than half reside at the Maryland Youth Residence Center, a locked facility, while the remainder reside either in state-funded group homes(about one-fourth) or in their own family homes.

Because Fresh Start is voluntary and uses no locks or restraints, the program operates with a strict behavioral code: youth who commit or threaten violence , and those found with or under the influence of drugs, are automatically expelled. Also, youth are allowed three personal days during each eight-week cycle. Absence counts as one personal day, and any lateness counts for half a day. If they exceed the three-day limit, youth are removed from the program and must apply for re-admission. As a result, Fresh Start has a daily attendance rate of more than 90 percent.

Although Fresh Start participants spend only 75 minutes per day in a classroom, most make substantial academic progress thanks to the program's extensive hands-on learning activities. Youth gain an average of 1.85 grades in reading, 1.0 grades in writing, and .65 grades in math. Of those who enter the program at an 8th grade level or higher, 77 percent earn their GEDs. Fresh Start youth also earn

The main 46-acre Gulf Coast campus – which has no perimeter fence and uses no locked cells or physical restraints – houses 144 youth in six dormitories. Another 32 participants – mostly older youth who are unlikely to return to their family homes – reside on an independent living campus.[33] All participants are between the ages of 16 and 18, and 80 percent are male. One-fifth of participants are white, while African American and Hispanic youths each comprise about two-fifths of the Gulf Coast population.

VOCATIONAL CORRECTIONS

The Gulf Coast program offers a strong dose of academic education. Participants spend two hours every day in Gulf Coast's Learning Resource Center where they work on basic skills, study for the GED, or earn high school credits with the help of a 20-station computer lab, as well as videos, workbooks, and individual tutoring from the Center's academic instructors. Students work at their own pace, using individualized plans developed and updated by staff based on extensive pre-testing and ongoing assessments.

These academic activities (as well as the vocational training described below) are overseen entirely by Gulf Coast, which established an independent charter school in 1998 after struggling to partner with local school districts throughout the prior two decades. With the charter school, Gulf Coast is now free to hire its own instructors, set its own hours, and establish its own curriculum – rather than trying to fit its program into the regulations and routines of the public schools.

dollars during the program through work with student-run businesses to build and sell boats and patio furniture. Youth typically earn $500 to $800 over the course of the program, although they can claim these rewards only if they graduate the program.

According to John Dillow, who oversees Fresh Start as director of Living Classrooms' Maritime Institute, the key to Fresh Start's success is the close personal attention participants receive both during and after the program. *At Living Classrooms, each group of four-five participants has its own instructor, and* each participant meets daily with the instructor to review his performance. Following graduation, Fresh Start continues to monitor and counsel graduates, with help from a team of "retention specialists."

Because of the close supervision and strict rules of the program, Fresh Start has a high attrition rate. Of the 154 youth who have entered the program between July 1997 and June 2000 and completed at least two weeks, 112 completed at least one 8-week module and 50 (32 percent) completed the entire 40-week program cycle. However, the long-term success of these graduates underscores the value of Fresh Start: 66 percent of graduates were either employed and/or enrolled in education in December 2000. Wages among the 52 percent of graduates who were employed averaged $7.67.[54]

Perhaps most impressively, only 19 percent of Fresh Start graduates had been rearrested since leaving the program, and only 7 percent had been reincarcerated – this in a state where 76 percent of youth released from state-funded juvenile corrections facilities are re-arrested within three years. Despite its far higher success rates, the 40-week Fresh Start program costs the state less than half as much as a 40-week stay in a juvenile corrections facility. Less cost, more safety.

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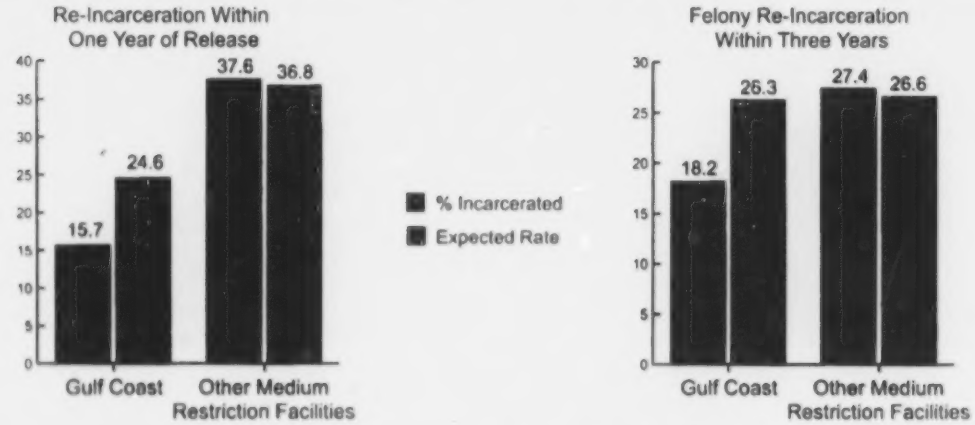
Nine Vocations. In addition to its academic activities, every Gulf Coast participant also enrolls in one of nine vocational programs:

- construction carpentry
- painting and decorating
- bricklaying/stone masonry
- culinary arts (cooking)
- horticulture-related occupations
- building trades (plumbing/electrical)
- automotive technology (and repair)
- mill and cabinetmaking
- office support systems (and office technology)

For each vocational track, Gulf Coast has a customized workshop, a dedicated instructor, and a 915-hour vocational curriculum. These curricula include a mixture of classroom lectures and hands-on learning activities. In the automotive shop, for instance, participants perform maintenance on the 36 vehicles owned by Gulf Coast. In the office support systems shop, they learn to operate office software programs and perform diagnostic tests and repairs on Gulf Coast's office computers. In addition, all participants take part in job readiness training to prepare them for the world-of-work, and most also take drivers education training.

Real-World Work Experience. In each vocational track, participants must demonstrate mastery of several dozen competencies in order to earn a vocational certificate. During their stays at Gulf Coast (which average six to nine months), 80 to 90 percent of Gulf Coast youth earn this credential, at which point they can participate in Gulf Coast's work experience activities (and begin wearing green shirts, rather than the blue trainee shirts they've worn until then).

GULF COAST TRADES CENTER:
RE-INCARCERATION VS. OTHER MEDIUM RESTRICTION JUVENILE FACILITIES IN TEXAS



Source: Data provided via fax by Dr. Chuck Jeffords, Texas Youth Commission, December 2000.

Work assignments include maintenance or office work activities within the Gulf Coast campus itself, or part-time jobs with local government agencies and nonprofit corporations in the New Waverly area. Gulf Coast staff transport the youth to and from these assignments, and they monitor participants' performance on the job through written agreements with the employers, plus frequent phone calls and site visits. The work activities are supported through the federal Workforce Investment Act (successor to the Job Training Partnership Act), and participants are paid minimum wage for all hours worked. Some money is deducted from many participants' wages for restitution, and the remaining wages are placed in savings accounts to be used for expenses related to finding employment. The balance is released when youth begin working in unsubsidized jobs in their home communities.

While work experience opportunities have long been a cornerstone of Gulf Coast's rehabilitative strategy, these opportunities have become even a more positive tool over the past three years thanks to the agency's new housing construction efforts. Gulf Coast established its own housing development corporation in 1998. Since then, with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's YouthBuild program (which provides funding for education and training and for wages), as well as a companion state "YouthWorks" program (which provides funding for materials and construction costs), Gulf Coast has built eight new homes, with another five scheduled to begin construction in January 2001.

At any one time, 35 youth can participate in Gulf Coast's YouthBuild program, and these youth split their time evenly between academics and on-the-job construction training. They participate in most aspects of the construction process – from laying foundation, to framing, to sheet-rocking, to roofing. Only highly technical areas, such as electrical wiring and plumbing, are left primarily to experienced professionals. Once finished, Gulf Coast sells the houses to low and moderate-income families at bargain prices (as low as $50,000 for a new three-bedroom home).

Aftercare (and Job Placement). After training delinquent youth for careers and providing them on-the-job work experience, Gulf Coast does not simply send them home and wish them luck. Rather, the agency provides extensive aftercare support – including job search and job placement assistance. Roughly half of the graduates take part in an intensive 90-day aftercare program, in which Gulf Coast staff serve as advocates and mentors, visiting youth in their homes at least three times per week. Another 40 percent of graduates take part in a more moderate aftercare program, and 10 percent live too far away

from Gulf Coast to receive aftercare support. Regardless of where they live, all Gulf Coast graduates receive job placement and job coaching assistance.

Behavior Management and Supervision. In addition to its strong emphases on academics, vocational training, work experience, and aftercare, Gulf Coast utilizes many behavioral management and counseling strategies typical in other juvenile corrections facilities. Gulf Coast uses a level system to rate each youth weekly on their behavior and cooperation, and then it allots privileges – recreational time, use of a game room, off-campus outings – for youth ranked at level three or level four (the top level). Youth can be dropped a level at any time for serious misconduct, and it takes two weeks of good behavior to restore a youth to his or her prior level. Gulf Coast also supports a Youth Leadership program, in which youth who volunteer can meet quarterly with the agency's board and have a say in facility policies, serve on an appeals board to hear other participants' grievances, qualify for the YouthBuild program, and go on occasional special outings.

Unfortunately, both staff and participants at Gulf Coast report that the behavior management regimen has suffered in recent years due to problems with the direct care workers who supervise youth in their dorms. In the past, many of these direct care workers were criminology students at nearby Sam Houston State College. However, as the economy has picked up in recent years, fewer and fewer students have applied for these jobs. As a result, Gulf Coast is increasingly forced to hire local residents with limited skills. Even after granting a wage increase in 2000, Gulf Coast pays the direct care workers a maximum of only $7 per hour during their first year on the job. Thus, staff turnover is high, and some of those hired lack the skills or motivation to rigorously enforce the Gulf Coast behavior management philosophy.

MORE WORK, LESS RECIDIVISM

Despite these staffing challenges, performance data from Gulf Coast reveal that its vocational approach to juvenile corrections is working. According to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), only 15.7 percent of youth who graduated from Gulf Coast from 1995 through 1999 were incarcerated within one year of release – compared to 37.6 percent of Texas youth released from other moderate security residential facilities during this same period. TYC also performed a statistical analysis (involving 20-30 variables) to calculate the predicted incarceration rate based on the specific profiles of youth in the Gulf Coast program, and it found that 36 percent fewer Gulf Coast graduates were incarcerated than its sophisticated model predicted. Likewise, the one-year arrest rate for violent offenses among Gulf Coast graduates was 29 percent lower than expected. Also, a three-year recidivism analysis found that Gulf Coast graduates' overall incarceration rate was 32 percent lower than expected and its incarceration rate for felony offenses was 31 percent lower.[55]

In addition to staying out of trouble, Gulf Coast graduates also excelled in terms of academic and occupational achievement. Roughly 60 percent of Gulf Coast graduates complete their GEDs, and 60 percent find employment in their chosen occupational field at an average starting wage of $7.50 per hour.

Operating Agency	Gulf Coast Trades Center
Program Type	Privately-Run Residential Corrections Facility
Program Goals	Rehabilitation and Career Preparation for Juvenile Offenders
Target Group	Youthful offenders committed to state custody
Key Strategies	Intensive vocational training in nine career tracks; job readiness training and work experience; strong aftercare supervision and support
Primary Funding Source(s)	Texas Youth Commission; county probation agencies; US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Workforce Investment Act
Evidence of Effectiveness	Low recidivism, high percentage of graduates employed at living wages
Contact Information	Thomas M. "Mike" Buzbee, Executive Director Gulf Coast Trades Center P.O. Box 515 New Waverly, TX 77358 Phone: (936) 344-6677; Fax: (936) 344-2386

CHALLENGE #8:

REDUCE INAPPROPRIATE DETENTION OF YOUTH AWAITING TRIAL OR PENDING PLACEMENT

"The inappropriate use of secure detention poses hazards for youth, jurisdictions, and society at large. Research indicates that detention does not deter future offending, but it does increase the likelihood that children will be placed out of their homes in the future, even when controlling for offense, prior history, and other factors."[56]

Annie E. Casey Foundation

When an adolescent is arrested, one of the most important decisions affecting his or her future will be made almost immediately: *detention*.

The choice whether or not to hold a young offender in a juvenile detention center – analogous to a local jail in the adult justice system – is not just a question of short-term liberty for the offender. Rather, this decision can have serious consequences for ultimate disposition of the young person's case. According to Mark Soler of the Youth Law Center, "Youth who are detained, rather than let go to their parents or released to some other program, are much more likely to be incarcerated at the end of the process."[57]

Unfortunately, evidence is abundant that ***pre-trial detention is used excessively, inefficiently, and inequitably in many jurisdictions nationwide, perhaps most.*** Under the law, juvenile detention centers are intended to house young people pending trial only if they pose a danger to themselves or others, or if they are a risk to flee the jurisdiction rather than appear for scheduled court hearings. However, 79 percent of all youth held in juvenile detention nationwide in 1997 were not charged with violent felony crimes. Many were accused only of a misdemeanor, status offense, or property crime. Many more were detained after failing to appear at an earlier court hearing – often following a long delay from arrest to hearing date and minimal (if any) follow-up to remind the youth of the hearing or encourage attendance.

Meaningful detention reform can ease chronic overcrowding and avert the need for new multi-million dollar juvenile lock-ups.... It can also be a fulcrum for a more fundamental change in juvenile justice – embracing what works and discarding unproductive but still-common practices that waste money, damage youth, and fail to protect citizens.

Meanwhile, inefficient case processing lengthens the duration of stay for many detained youth – causing young people to spend far more time than necessary away from their families and out of school. Once youth are convicted of crimes ("adjudicated delinquent" in the parlance of juvenile courts), many spend weeks or months more in detention waiting idly for placement into a corrections or treatment program.

These problems are a large part of the reason why the population housed in juvenile detention facilities nationwide has risen dramatically in the past two decades – not only during the period of rapidly increasing juvenile crime (from 1984 to 1993) but also since 1993 when juvenile crime rates have declined sharply. In 1995, 62 percent of youth held in detention were in overcrowded facilities – placing them at heightened risk for violence, and decreasing the quality of education, health and other services provided.

Fortunately, a number of jurisdictions have shown in recent years that over-use of detention can be overcome. In 1987, youth advocates filed suit in Broward County, Florida to protest overcrowding in the local juvenile detention center, which was overflowing with an average daily population of 160 young offenders. The county responded with a multi-pronged detention reform initiative. It introduced an objective screening device to determine whether each offender was a danger to himself or others, or a risk to flee, and it only detained those who met one of those two criteria. The county created new procedures to minimize "failures to appear" for court hearings, a major problem in Broward (and many other juvenile courts) and a cause for youth to be rounded up and detained. And Broward launched alternatives-to-detention programs to provide intensive oversight as well as mentoring and case-management for higher-risk youth released pending trial. Through these efforts, Broward County reduced its average daily headcount by two-thirds over five years – to only 56 young people per day – and the county saved $5.2 million in operating costs, construction, and overtime.[58]

Broward County's success in reforming juvenile detention paved the way for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's multi-city Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (see sidebar on p. 56) – which demonstrated again that many young people now languishing in detention beds can be safely supervised in the community or more rapidly placed into correctional programs. So too does the Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan project in King County (Seattle), Washington, which is detailed in the following pages.

Meaningful detention reform can ease chronic overcrowding and avert the need for new multi-million dollar juvenile lock-ups. As the King County story demonstrates, it can also be a fulcrum for a more fundamental change in juvenile justice – embracing what works and discarding unproductive but still-common practices that waste money, damage youth, and fail to protect citizens.

Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan
Bringing Detention Reform to Seattle and King County, WA

Like most urban centers in America, the Seattle area has seen a sharp drop in serious juvenile crime since the early 1990s. Yet, like a lot of places, the juvenile detention center in King County – opened in 1991 – brimmed to capacity in the late 1990s. Admissions to detention rose 27 percent from 1993 to 1998, and the average length of stay in detention rose 39 percent – causing the average daily population to jump from 119 to 199. In January 1999, the detention population topped 200, though the facility was designed to house only 160 youth. The overcrowding forced King County to draw up plans for another detention center: construction for a 80-bed unit would cost $11 million, and operational costs would add another $5.8 million per year.

Such an investment would be worth every penny if the safety of King County residents was at stake. But was a new detention center the only option to prevent the county from having dangerous young criminals loose on the streets? A team of community and local government leaders began examining this question in 1997 as part of a larger review of county juvenile justice programs for the new millennium.

Here's what they found: Without jeopardizing safety, King County could dramatically reduce the detention population, avert the need for a new detention center, and reduce subsequent offending. The only catch was, to achieve these goals the county would have to change virtually everything about how its juvenile justice system did business. In August 2000, the King County Council voted to do just that – placing the proposed new detention center on indefinite hold and instead investing would-be construction and operations funds into long-needed administrative reforms and far-sighted prevention and treatment programs.

These reforms, which are now in varying stages of implementation, have already reduced King County's

detention population by 30 percent while offering troubled youth an array of new and improved programs with proven power to prevent or reverse delinquency.

FRAMING A MASTER PLAN

King County's Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan (Master Plan), commissioned by County Executive Ron Sims in December 1997, was developed over three years by a 22-person oversight team with support from a 16-person working group, expert consultants, and various project teams involving more than 100 representatives from county and city agencies, courts, community agencies, and schools.

In the first phase, the study team interviewed several dozen stakeholders in the Seattle area and held juvenile justice policy workshops in May and June 1998. These efforts, along with research by project staff and deliberations by the oversight committee, formed the basis for an interim report in August 1998. This report concluded, in part, that "Additional detention capacity will be needed to meet the current and future demand for the county if community based alternative programs... and other diversion programs are not expanded." However, the Phase One report stated, "This analysis found a high potential for the use of alternatives, which are more effective in terms of cost and impact for a high percentage of the youth entering the juvenile justice system."[59]

"We are at a crossroads regarding the future of juvenile justice in King County. The choices are clear. We can continue to do what we did throughout the 1990s and face the need to construct and operate a major new juvenile detention facility, or we may rethink how we do business and find other ways to promote justice, protect the public, and help youth in trouble make responsible choices."

In the second phase of the study process, the Master Plan team developed a mountain of data regarding the options for reform in the local juvenile justice system. Not only did the study team identify 17 policy and program recommendations, but it also went the next step of combining these recommendations into three reform scenarios (ranging from limited implementation to full implementation of the recommendations). The team then developed a model to project the impact of each scenario on the size of the detention population and the county's juvenile justice costs over time.

"We are at a crossroads regarding the future of juvenile justice in King County," the Phase Two report found. "The choices are clear. We can continue to do what we did throughout the 1990s and face the need to construct and operate a major new juvenile detention facility, or we may rethink how we do business and find other ways to promote justice, protect the public, and help youth in trouble make responsible choices."[60]

TARGETS FOR REFORM

The Master Plan identified many areas ripe for reform, including several that contributed directly to overcrowding in the county detention facility.

Objective Detention Screening. Historically, when police arrested young people for charges and decided not to release them with a warning, they would bring offenders to detention and simply drop them off. Only then would probation staff assess youth to determine whether they posed a threat to public safety or a risk to flee. If the young person did not pose a danger, detention center staff tried to find an adult or guardian to take custody – often unsuccessfully. Thus, many low-risk youth found their way behind bars. When a team of consultants and staff analyzed the problem, they found that by providing police with specific detention criteria, and then prohibiting officers from bringing less serious offenders to detention, the county could free up many detention beds.

Alternatives to Detention. As of October 1998, 46 percent of the youth locked inside King County's detention center were charged with a misdemeanor or status offense. Only 28 percent were charged with a serious felony. However, only about twenty

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative

After the dramatic success of its grants to support juvenile detention reform in Florida's Broward County (see p.54), the Annie E. Casey Foundation decided to take its show on the road. Beginning in December 1992, the foundation developed, launched, and supported a multi-million dollar, multi-site project to help develop a model for detention reform that could be used throughout the nation.

Specifically, the **Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)** provided implementation grants of $2.25 million each to Sacramento County, CA, Multnomah County (Portland), OR, and Cook County (Chicago), IL over a period of three years.[61] The aim of the grants was to help these localities achieve four goals: (1) build a consensus on the purposes of juvenile detention (and thereby eliminate unnecessary and inappropriate detention placements); (2) reduce the number of youth who fail to appear in court for scheduled hearings or commit a new offense while pending adjudication; (3) improve cost-efficiency in detention by developing responsible alternatives to secure confinement; and (4) improve conditions and alleviate overcrowding in secure (i.e., locked) detention facilities.

The results from this JDAI initiative effort were rich –both for the localities involved, and for juvenile justice practitioners nationwide thanks to the wealth of tangible information disseminated by Casey through this initiative.

"Every measure we have suggests that in Chicago, Portland, and Sacramento, JDAI achieved significant reductions in detention admissions and significant improvements in the conditions of confinement," reports Barry Krisberg, president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and chief evaluator of JDAI. "And there were no increases in either failure-to-appear rates or pretrial crime rates."

In the three counties, staff from juvenile justice agencies and the courts made their most significant progress in three areas:

- *Reducing inappropriate admissions to detention.* In each of the three jurisdictions, juvenile probation agencies developed objective risk-assessment instruments to measure which youth offenders were really dangerous or likely to skip their scheduled court hearings. These objective measures replaced haphazard screening processes that previously allowed many youth to sit in detention as punishment (which is unfair to youth who not yet been convicted) or because no guardian could be located.

youth each day participated in alternatives-to-detention programs such as home detention, electronic monitoring, or intensive supervision, and an alternatives-to-detention intake worker was assigned to only one of the county's four juvenile courtrooms. In other jurisdictions, alternative programs report success rates of 85-90 percent supervising youth without arrests and getting them to scheduled court hearings – and at a fraction of the cost of secure detention. Expanding its alternative programs, analysts found, would free up many beds.

Appearance Rates for Juvenile Court. Twenty-nine percent of youth admitted to King County's detention center in 1996 were arrested on bench warrants because they failed to appear in court. Though 78 percent of these youth were accused of misdemeanors or minor property felonies, most were admitted to detention – at an average cost of $144 per day. Despite these costs, the county did little to encourage youth to appear – mailing a reminder letter, in English only, and often to incorrect addresses. Juvenile justice staff recommended a new plan to begin phoning youth and their parents just prior to hearing dates, a procedure that could cut the failure to appear rate and free more beds.

Truants and Status Offenders. In 1995, the state of Washington passed the "Becca Bill," named for Rebecca Hedman, a 13-year-old runaway who was

- *Expedited case-processing and reduced lengths of stay in detention.* Sacramento and Multnomah Counties made dramatic strides in eliminating unnecessary and expensive delays in juvenile cases and reducing the periods of confinement for youth initially placed into detention. In both of these jurisdictions, probation staff began to meet with prosecution and defense attorneys as soon as possible after arrest to resolve cases and/or find alternatives to locked detention for youth who posed few dangers.

- *Detention alternatives for non-dangerous youth.* In Cook County, the most impressive outcome of the JDAI project was an array of new detention alternatives programs to supervise youth in the community while they awaited court hearings. These alternatives – including evening reporting centers, home confinement, community service work projects, and non-secure shelters – have succeeded with more than 90 percent of the youth assigned. The alternatives have allowed the county to reduce the number of youth placed into secure detention and lower the average daily population in its detention facility (designed for 498 youth) from more than 750 per night early in 1996 to fewer than 550 in the summer and fall of 1999.

In addition to these concrete accomplishments in the targeted cities, JDAI also produced valuable information for juvenile justice practitioners in other jurisdictions. The Casey Foundation hosted a national juvenile detention conference in December 1996, and it has since published a series of thirteen "Pathways to Detention Reform" reports examining aspects of detention reform, plus an interim evaluation report. (A final evaluation report is pending.) Thus, for the first time, juvenile justice practitioners have a wealth of information at their disposal to understand and address detention reform – a critical but little-understood battleground in the larger juvenile justice reform challenge.

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murdered while walking the streets. The law granted wide discretion to the courts to intervene with and confine young people who have not committed crimes – including runaways, truants, and other status offenders. The results in King County were dramatic: within two years the number of non-offenders admitted to detention increased by 1800 percent, from 34 in 1995 to 615 in 1997. Consultants and staff found that many cost-effective options were available to avert detention and reduce court costs for non-offenders. These included non-court truancy boards to resolve problems before court petitions are filed, truancy sweeps by police to round up truant youth and intervene before truancy becomes ingrained, and mediation to resolve problems between unmanageable youth and their guardians without court involvement.

Lengths of Stay. From 1993 to 1998 the average period of confinement for youth in the King County detention rose from 7.6 days to 10.6 days, accounting for 62.5 percent of the overall growth in average daily population at the detention center. These increasingly lengthy periods of detention could be reversed, staff found, by adopting clear sentencing guidelines to expedite transfers out of detention following adjudication hearings and by speeding up required assessments for youth bound for state juvenile corrections facilities.

Research-driven Intervention Programs. In 1997, the Washington State Legislature passed a new "Community Juvenile Accountability Act" that set aside $7.65 million for local juvenile courts to implement research-proven intervention models that reduce recidivism among high- and moderate-risk youthful offenders. (See sidebar in Challenge #3.) Using these funds, King County implemented programs for Functional Family Therapy (serving 150-200 youth in 2000), Multisystemic Therapy (serving 45 youth in 2000), and a less intensive ($400 per participant) classroom-based social competency training called Aggression Replacement Training (serving 300 in 2000). Juvenile justice staff expect these programs to substantially reduce recidivism among participating youth – lowering both the crime rate and the need for juvenile detention beds.

THE FRUITS OF REFORM

In April 2000, the juvenile justice staff compiled a package of four options for King County Executive Ron Sims and the King County Council. The first option involved no change in policies, and the remaining three ranged from moderate to aggressive implementation of the reforms detailed above. Whereas the status quo option would require 255 detention beds by 2005, necessitating construction of a new detention center, the three reform plans would result in space needs ranging from an estimated 175 beds for the least aggressive option to 137 beds for the most aggressive plan. Weighing added costs for detention alternatives and other new services against the savings in reduced detention, these three options would result in a net savings to King County of $3.9 to $5.4 million per year.[62]

Even before the final decision was made in August 2000, King County began to implement many of the proposed reforms. Police officers now carry cards detailing precise criteria for which youth can be taken to detention center and which youth must be released to parents or guardians. Volunteers now operate a "warrant reduction" phone bank to remind youth and parents of upcoming hearing dates and encourage them to attend. Model intervention programs are up and running, and the county has funding proposals pending to significantly expand these programs in the coming years. As a result, the King County detention population has begun to decline, falling from more than 200 in January 1999 to fewer than 140 in August 2000.

Though the Master Plan's long-term prospects for success are clouded somewhat by administrative issues,[63] many signs of progress are now evident in King County's juvenile justice efforts. At a cost far below what would have been required to build a new detention facility, King County youth are participating in new alternatives to detention and home-based intervention programs that have solid records for reducing future offending rates.

When it comes to detention, perhaps even more than other areas in juvenile justice, the opportunities are many for less spending, more safety.

Operating Agency	King County Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan Oversight Committee
Program Type	County-Sponsored Study Commission
Program Goals	Reduce Overcrowding in Juvenile Detention; Eliminate Need for Construction of New Detention Facility; Develop Alternative Programs/Policies to Lower Delinquency and Improve Outcomes for Youthful Offenders
Target Group	Delinquent offenders and children in need of supervision
Key Strategies	Prevent unnecessary placements into juvenile detention; reduce failures-to-appear in court by delinquent youth; implement alternatives to secure detention; replicate model intervention programs to reduce recidivism among delinquent offenders.
Primary Funding Source(s)	King County, State of Washington, US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Evidence of Effectiveness	Sharp drop in daily detention population, construction of new detention facility deferred indefinitely, and model delinquency intervention programs being replicated in King County
Contact Information	Michael Gedeon, Project Coordinator Juvenile Justice Operational Master Plan 1211 East Alder Street Seattle, WA 98122 Phone: (206) 205-9532; Fax: (206) 205-9349

CONCLUSION

Less cost, more safety. Lower recidivism, more youth success. These are the bottom line results of the programs and initiatives highlighted in this report.

Nor are these highlighted programs alone in demonstrating that substantial progress is attainable through juvenile justice reform. Other guiding light programs and initiatives in other jurisdictions are also proving that the eight challenges identified in this report can be effectively met and overcome. In addition, *Less Help, More Hype* identified several more weaknesses that now cripple juvenile justice efforts nationwide and several more challenges for juvenile justice reform: reducing excessive transfers of youthful offenders to adult courts; engaging community organizations and volunteers to help supervise juvenile offenders; improving legal representation for youthful offenders; and carefully monitoring the success of juvenile justice programs and institutions. Guiding light programs are also tackling these challenges, proving again that far greater success is attainable.

Particularly when it comes to juvenile offenders, a strategy of human reclamation is not a pie-in-the-sky fantasy. Rather, as the programs highlighted in this report demonstrate, reforming juvenile justice represents a common sense, dollars-and-cents opportunity – a sound and sorely needed investment in our safety and in our future.

In its cover story for the week of November 13, 2000, *Newsweek* reflected on the paradoxical trend in America – the land of the free – toward incarcerating an ever-increasing proportion of our nation's poor and minority youth. "We believe in making people pay for their crimes," wrote reporter Ellis Cose, "in protecting the weak from the vicious. We believe in justice. And we believe in simple truths.

"Our strivings to protect society may have weakened it," Cose continued, "for they fuel the notion that we can afford to throw human beings away. And they discourage us from asking whether it is morally or economically justifiable to invest so much in locking lost souls down and so little in salvaging them.

"In fact," the *Newsweek* story concluded, "a strategy of human reclamation may be the only thing that makes sense in the long run, not only for those fated to spend time locked down, but for the communities to which they seem destined to return—communities that now are doubly damned: to suffer when wrongdoers are taken away and yet again when they come back."[64]

Particularly when it comes to juvenile offenders, a strategy of human reclamation is not a pie-in-the-sky fantasy. Rather, as the programs highlighted in this report demonstrate, reforming juvenile justice represents a common sense, dollars-and-cents opportunity – a sound and sorely needed investment in our safety and in our future.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Mendel is an independent writer and researcher on poverty-related issues in youth development, neighborhood safety, employment and training, and community economic development. In June 2000, he authored *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works - And What Doesn't*, a comprehensive review of delinquency prevention and juvenile justice co-published by the American Youth Policy Forum, Child Welfare League of America, Coalition for Juvenile Justice, National Collaboration for Youth, National Crime Prevention Council, National League of Cities, and National Urban League.

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